

# Introduction

Every five years, St. Louis County government is challenged to create a general plan that will align resources to address the most critical issues facing St. Louis County. As mandated by charter, St. Louis County must review its general plan to ensure that the plan's goals and policies are consistent with the present conditions and issues facing the County. The last general plan was the *1990-1995 St. Louis County Strategic Plan: Shaping the Future Together*. Thus, in 1998, St. Louis County again embarked on a general plan update to guide the citizens and government of St. Louis County into the next century.

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The culmination of committee work, citizen surveys, community engagement, trend analysis, presentations, expert task force recommendations; and numerous meetings between Department of Planning staff, consultants, the County Executive's Office, and department directors resulted in the 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan.



## What's Different About the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan?

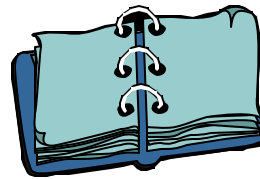
The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan builds upon the strengths of the previous plan and adds some new components as well. Historically, St. Louis County Department of Planning has placed great value on public involvement in planning processes, and the 1990-1995 Strategic Plan contained an unprecedented amount of citizen input. The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan also included a community engagement component, but utilized technology that was not available in past years to involve citizens. As examples, Strategic Plan information was placed on the County's web site, a special e-mail group was established to receive public comment, and a 24-hour Strategic Plan Hotline with voice mail recorded citizen comments.

The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan also places greater emphasis on implementation than past plans by introducing a formalized system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan. With the County Executive's Office serving as an internal monitor, County departments will complete action plans that link outcomes and strategies of the Strategic Plan to annual budgets and work plans. Departments will also produce semi-annual progress reports updating the status

of achieving the outcomes and strategies. In addition, an external citizen based committee will monitor and provide feedback to keep plan implementation on track.

Another difference of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan is the increased focus on effectiveness rather than consensus. While the 1990-1995 Strategic Plan resulted in a "laundry list" of 130 priority actions to be achieved by St. Louis County government, the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan focuses on addressing only the four most critical issues:

- ! **County's Role in the Region**
- ! **Reinvestment in Older Communities**
- ! **Transportation**
- ! **Services to Unincorporated Areas**



## 2000-2004 Strategic Plan Format

The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan was produced in two formats:

- ! **Citizen Friendly Pamphlet**
- ! **Comprehensive Workbook**

The citizen format highlights the strategic planning process, strategic issues, and outcomes and strategies. The comprehensive work book is designed for use by County government elected officials, department directors, and key staff. The Strategic Plan is a working document, and the design of the workbook reflects this in that pages can be added or removed as necessary over the course of the next five years. The workbook is meant to be a hands-on document that can easily and readily adapt to policy changes, staffing, and budget allocations.

# Strategic Planning Process

To develop a planning process to update the 1990-1995 Strategic Plan, St. Louis County reviewed strategic planning processes from both the private and public sector. Combining the best practices from the private and public sector examples, a five-step planning process was developed.



## Step 1: Setting the Direction

The first step in the strategic planning process was to establish an internal pre-planning committee to set the direction of the Strategic Plan update. The pre-planning committee was formed in March 1998 with representation from the County Council, County Executive's Office, and four key departments.

### Step 1 Actions:

#### ! Determine if St. Louis County is Ready to Update the Strategic Plan

To determine if the County environment was suitable to proceed with a Strategic Plan update, the pre-planning committee evaluated costs and benefits of strategic planning, discussed barriers to a successful strategic plan and ways to overcome them, and identified key stakeholders. The committee also focused on key issues facing County government,

internally and externally. Ultimately, the pre-planning committee agreed that the County should proceed with the Strategic Plan update.

#### ! Design the Strategic Planning Process

The 1990 planning process was presented to the pre-planning committee, highlighting what worked well and what could be improved upon. Department of Planning staff also conducted research and reviewed strategic planning processes used by other communities and the private sector. Overall, there is not much variation, as most strategic planning processes contain the same basic steps: pre-planning, situation/environmental analysis, issue identification, implementation, and monitoring. Thus, the pre-planning committee designed a planning process around the basic steps, incorporating key elements developed throughout the Committee's discussions.



## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE 2000-2004 STRATEGIC PLAN

- ' Balance of external and internal input
- ' Holistic, cross departmental approach
- ' Full support by all levels of government
- ' Strong element of public participation
- ' Focus on results and be outcome-oriented
- ' Strive for effectiveness rather than consensus
- ' Connect outcomes and strategies to Department budgets and work plans
- ' Create a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating implementation
- ' Clearly state departmental responsibility and time frame to complete strategies

### ! Obtain Commitment from the Key Leaders of County Government

The pre-planning committee continually expressed the importance of obtaining support from the County Executive's Office, County Council, and department directors. The committee believes that support from all levels of County government is essential to the success of the Strategic Plan, since it is ultimately these parties that will be implementing the Plan's general action recommendations and outcomes and strategies.



### Step 2: Assessing the Environment

The second step in the strategic planning process was to conduct an assessment of St. Louis County's external and internal environments. Externally, it is imperative to address the needs and concerns of the customers of County Government and examine opportunities and threats. Internally, it is important to examine existing strengths and weaknesses and project future trends to determine the future roles of St. Louis County government. Integral to assessing the environment, is providing a number of networks for input from the general public and County elected officials and staff.



## Networks for Strategic Plan Information and Input

- ' **Intranet**  
Available to all County employees, the Intranet was a medium for employees to e-mail feedback and provide input.
- ' **Internet**  
The St. Louis County web site posted information about the Strategic Planning and had a mechanism for users to e-mail comments directly to County government.
- ' **E-mail**  
A special e-mail group was set up to receive strategic plan input.
- ' **Telephone**  
A 24-hour Strategic Plan telephone hotline with voice mail recorded citizen comments and provided the dates, times, and locations of the Community Forums.
- ' **Flyers and Postcards**  
A flyer announcing the strategic plan update and how to provide input was included in the personal property tax bills mailed to over 400,000 households. Approximately 10,000 postcards inviting citizens to the community forums were mailed to subdivision trustees, libraries, school districts, churches, state and municipal officials, and many other groups.
- ' **Mail**  
St. Louis County Department of Planning accepted and responded to written letters from citizens and other interested parties.
- ' **Media**  
Newspapers, cable television, and radio stations were provided with information on the Strategic Plan.
- ' **Community Forums**  
Nine community meetings were held at locations throughout St. Louis County to collect input from citizens.

## Step 2 Actions:

### ! Conduct a Trends Analysis

A detailed analysis of regional and St. Louis County demographic, economic, and land use data was performed by the Department of Planning in order to identify the trends and impacts that will shape St. Louis County for the next five years.

### ! Produce a Video

St. Louis County Department of Planning staff produced a video, *St. Louis County: On the Brink of Change*, to correspond with the Strategic Plan update. The video highlights current County demographic conditions and discusses future trends that will impact the County. The video was shown to the public as background information to stimulate thought and discussion at the community forums.

### ! Conduct Focus Groups and a Telephone Survey

Focus groups and a telephone survey were administered by the Attitude Research Company (ARC) on behalf of the St. Louis County Department of Planning in December 1998 and February 2000. Prior to administering the telephone survey, four focus groups comprised of unincorporated and municipal County residents were held to refine survey questions and provide qualitative data. The telephone survey was then administered to 617 randomly selected households to provide quantitative data on the citizen satisfaction with County government as a service provider, awareness of the County's role in providing services, demand for additional services the County might provide, and major issues facing the County.

### ! Hold a Retreat for County Officials

Elected officials, department directors, and senior staff participated in a one-day retreat in February 1999. The purpose of the retreat was to bring together the influential people of county government to inform them of the strategic planning process, gain support for the effort, and obtain input on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) within St. Louis County government and St. Louis County as a place. The first half of the retreat included presentations of the trend analysis and telephone survey results, and the latter part focused on obtaining input. Retreat participants were

divided in four small discussion groups and facilitated by the Strategic Plan consultants, Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis. After compiling lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, retreat participants were asked to select the top issues facing the County.

### ! Organize a Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed in March 1999 to oversee the strategic planning process, critically review findings, and make recommendations for further action. The committee was comprised of twenty-two individuals representing St. Louis County government, municipalities, businesses, and regional organizations.

### ! Host Community Forums

Nine community forums were held throughout the County to gain diverse input from citizens on the critical issues facing St. Louis County in April 1999. Much like the retreat, Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis facilitated small group discussions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of St. Louis County. Participants then voted on the most critical issues facing St. Louis County in the coming years.

### ! Write a SWOT Analysis Report

A summary report was drafted to combine the input from the SWOT analyses performed by County officials at the retreat and by citizens and interested parties at the community forums. The SWOT report formed a basis for identifying the most critical issues to be addressed in the Strategic Plan.



## Step 3: Identifying Issues, Strategies, and Priorities

Data from the trends analysis, focus groups, random telephone survey, and SWOT analysis, coupled with the public input from the community forums, telephone hotline, e-mail, and mail revealed a range of issues. However, there were four issues that were continually named as being top priorities for St. Louis County to address over the next five years. The four strategic issues are:

- ! **County's Role in the Region**
- ! **Reinvestment in Older Communities**
- ! **Transportation**
- ! **Services to Unincorporated Areas**

Additionally, a number of overarching issues emerged, including:

- ! **Reviewing the organizational structure of County government to better address its strategic priorities**
- ! **Implementing broader means of communication**
- ! **Financing strategic priorities**
- ! **Addressing the needs of a diversifying population**

### **Step 3 Actions:**

#### **! Draft Issue Papers**

Four research papers, one for each strategic issue, were prepared by Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis. The papers contain background information, in-depth analysis of the issue, and highlights of best practices from around the country to serve as examples of what could be done in St. Louis County. The issue papers provided an overall perspective of the critical issues to stimulate thought and discussion by the task forces.

#### **! Form Task Forces**

Expert task forces were formed to develop the specific outcomes and strategies to address the four critical issues. The four task forces, one focusing on each strategic issue, were composed of internal and external experts with considerable knowledge regarding the issue. Task force participants included County officials, municipal officials, regional and civic leaders, and private sector representatives. The task forces were facilitated by the strategic planning consultants, Development Strategies, INC. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis, and the St. Louis County Department of Planning staff.

#### **! Meet with County Department Directors**

The respective department directors responsible for implementing the outcomes and the strategies developed by the task forces were gathered together for group meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain initial support and refine the outcomes

and strategies. The meetings were facilitated by Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis, and the St. Louis County Department of Planning staff.

#### **! Conduct Public Opinion Polling**

Focus groups and an opinion poll were conducted in December 1999 and January 2000 by Attitude Research Company (ARC) on behalf of the St. Louis County Department of Planning to test the recommendations of the Strategic Plan. The focus groups, made up of unincorporated and municipal County residents, helped refine opinion poll questions and served as qualitative data. The opinion poll was administered to 603 randomly selected households to ensure that the outcomes and strategies developed by the task forces were consistent with the ideas of the general public.

Specifically, the opinion poll asked for each resident's opinion on Strategic Plan recommendations that would require voter approval including bond issues, sales tax increases, and reestablishing the use tax. Topics that were tested include infrastructure, parks and bike trails, MetroLink, downtown improvements in the City of St. Louis, and revitalizing deteriorating neighborhoods of St. Louis County through a Community Comeback Trust.



## **Step 4: Developing and Implementing the Strategic Plan**

### **Step 4 Actions:**

#### **! Write the Draft Plan**

With the strategic issues identified, general action recommendations targeted, and outcomes and strategies established, the draft 2000-2004 Strategic Plan was written by the St. Louis County Department of Planning. The draft Strategic Plan presented a brief overview of St. Louis County demographic information and trend analysis, and reviewed the strategic planning process. The heart of the draft Strategic Plan focused on the four strategic issues, general action recommendations, and outcomes and strategies.

### ! Review the Draft Plan

The draft 2000-2004 Strategic Plan was issued for public review in October 1999. Copies of the draft Strategic Plan were distributed to participants who provided input into the Strategic Plan, including citizens, County departments, municipalities, steering committee members, and task force participants. Copies of the draft were also made available at local public libraries. Overall, the draft Strategic Plan was well-received, and no substantial changes to the content were suggested.

### ! Develop the Final Strategic Plan

The final 2000-2004 Strategic Plan will be produced in two formats. A citizen format will include a short summary of the strategic planning process, strategic issues, general action recommendations, and outcomes and strategies. The County government format will be a comprehensive work book designed for use by elected officials, department directors, and key staff. Both documents will be written by the St. Louis County Department of Planning.

### ! Adopt the Strategic Plan

The 2000-2004 Strategic Plan will be presented to the County Council for formal adoption in 2000.

### ! Implement the Strategic Plan

Implementing the general action recommendations and outcomes and strategies will be the primary responsibility of County departments. It is critical that departmental budgets and work plans are linked to the recommendations of the Strategic Plan. To do this, departments will be required to complete Action Plans outlining the measures they will take in each year to further the implementation of outcomes and strategies. The Action Plans will also detail who will be the responsible party and the target date for completion. Departmental Action Plans will be updated annually.



## Step 5: Monitoring and Evaluating Performance

By having a systematic way for comparing actual performance to planned performance, the actions that proved effective and those that did not can be

determined. With that knowledge, St. Louis County government can reassess what to do differently in the future to better achieve outcomes and strategies in the Strategic Plan.

### Step 5 Actions:

#### ! Complete Progress Reports

County departments responsible for implementing the outcomes and strategies of the Strategic Plan will complete semi-annual progress reports. The progress reports will detail the actions taken by departments toward achieving a specific outcome and strategy of the Strategic Plan, including the responsible party, budget amount requested, and progress to date.

#### ! Monitor Plan Implementation

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan will be an ongoing process requiring the time and commitment of the County Executive's Office, County Council, department directors, and key staff. Internally, the County Executive's Office will serve as the monitor for Strategic Plan implementation. The County Executive's Office will review the semi-annual progress reports completed by the County departments responsible for implementing the outcomes and strategies of the Strategic Plan in June and December for each year of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.

Externally, an independent committee will be charged with monitoring and providing feedback on Strategic Plan implementation. The committee will be made up of citizens and other County stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. It is expected that this committee will meet bi-annually, corresponding to the submittal of the semi-annual progress reports from County departments.

#### ! Produce an Annual Report Card

At the end of each year of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan, an annual report card will be produced and released to the general public. The annual report card will evaluate the year's activities related to the Strategic Plan, and assign letter grades based upon how well St. Louis County has furthered the achievement of the outcomes and strategies of the Strategic Plan.

# Assessing Our Environment

One of the most important steps in any strategic planning process is to conduct an assessment of the environment to identify the existing conditions and future trends facing an organization. For St. Louis County, this means examining the external environment of St. Louis County, the place and its residents; and the internal environment, the government and its customers. Integral to assessing the environment, is providing mediums for input from all key stakeholders, including government officials and staff, residents, and customers of St. Louis County government. For the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan, there were four primary mediums to gather input from key stakeholders used to assess the environment:

- ! **Trends Analysis**
- ! **Telephone Survey**
- ! **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis**
- ! **Input by telephone, e-mail, and written letters**



## Trends Analysis: State of St. Louis County

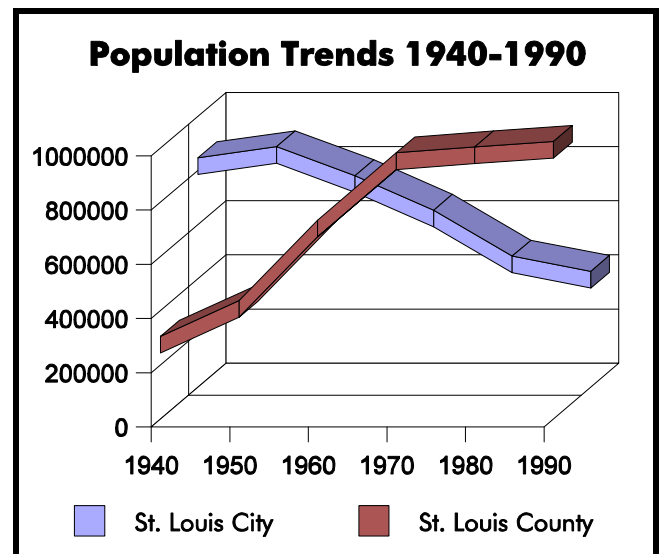
As St. Louis County reaches the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is a mature, nearly fully developed urban county. St. Louis County has long enjoyed a reputation as an excellent place to live and work. St. Louis County is, in fact, the most affluent and populous county in Missouri, as well as the state's largest employment center. Yet St. Louis County, and the region of which it is an integral part, is changing. St. Louis County is undergoing significant demographic changes which are not necessarily unique to St. Louis County as they mirror the demographic trends of the entire nation.

However, the commonality of the changes should not downplay the impacts on St. Louis County. The changes will ultimately alter the quality of life, resource distribution, and the roles of both the private and public sectors in St. Louis County. St. Louis County government must be ready to deal with the changes, and an important step is identifying the potential outcomes. This section presents a trend analysis conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning that assesses the current demographic trends and their possible impacts on St. Louis County. With new challenges on the horizon, St. Louis County officials must be prepared to build on the County's many strengths and boldly tackle its future challenges.

## ! Population

Covering 524 square miles, St. Louis County is home to 1,000,000 residents, nearly 20% of the state's population. St. Louis County's population grew rapidly between 1940 and 1970, increasing from about 274,000 just before World War II to 951,000 by 1970. Most of the growth can be attributed to migration within the metropolitan area as residents of the City of St. Louis relocated to St. Louis County. Since 1970 though, St. Louis County has experienced a pattern of relatively slow population growth, with the County growing just 2% in the 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1990, population decline was greatest in inner ring suburbs bordering the City of St. Louis, and in North St. Louis County, including areas adjacent to Lambert Airport that were affected



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

by the airport expansion. Since 1980, the number of persons per household has declined, and the sharpest increase has been in the number of one and two person households. By 1990, population growth stabilized as the population of St. Louis County reached 993,508.

Today, with the extensive suburban development in adjoining counties, the population influx of people into St. Louis County which took place in the 1950s and 1960s has shifted to outward migration from the County. In other words, more people are moving out of the County than moving in. The population of the County continues to move toward outlying areas where extensive new housing construction is occurring.

The population shift from St. Louis County to outlying counties has come at the expense of the communities in St. Louis County. The impact is particularly evident in communities located in the inner ring adjacent to the City of St. Louis that flourished in the late 1960s and 1970s. The result of a shifting population has primarily come in the form of disinvestment, or lack of reinvestment, in these communities.

**! Age**

The major demographic trend in St. Louis County, like the nation as a whole, is the aging of the postwar “baby boom” generation. The extensive population growth after World War II now translates into a large population of “baby boomers between

**Baby-Boomers**

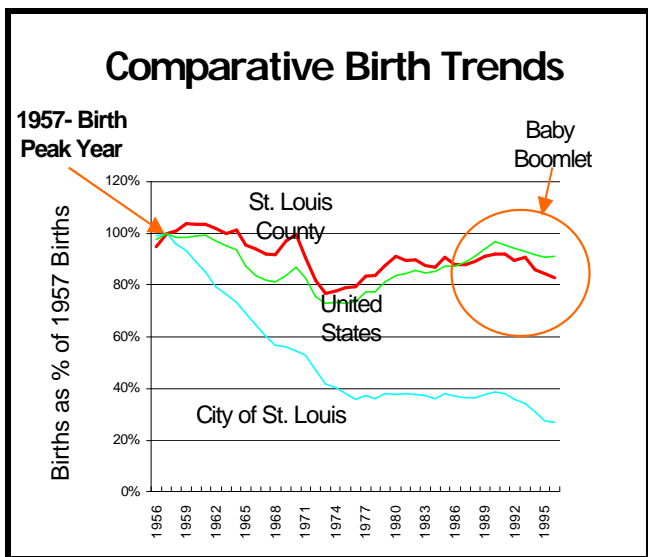
Baby boomers have had a significant impact on St. Louis County over the years because they are the largest age group. As this generation ages, they will continue to affect the services and public facilities throughout St. Louis County.

- ‘ In 1980, the largest age groups in the County were teenagers and people in their 20s;
- ‘ By 1990, people in their 30s were the largest group;
- ‘ In 2000, it will be people in their 40s.

the ages of 40 and 65. Additionally, the population 65 years and older is also growing, and will continue to increase more rapidly than any other age group as improvements in medicine and healthier lifestyles extend life span. Estimates indicate that the County elderly population will increase from 8% over 65 in 1970 to 20% in 2020. The consequence of a large, aging population translates into a higher level of needs and services, as well as alternative approaches to serving an active elderly population. For example, although nursing homes will still be needed, a continuum of housing options and levels of care will be required to support the more active elderly population. Transportation alternatives to link areas with high concentrations of elderly population, such as the inner-ring communities, to commercial, educational, and cultural activity centers will need to be developed. Consequently, more resources will be required than have previously been invested to serve the growing elderly population as the demand for special health care, housing, transportation, senior programming, and other support services escalates.

**! Racial and Ethnic Diversity**

Over the last several decades, St Louis County has become more racially and ethnically diverse. Since 1980, the African-American population has increased 27 %. Although a small share of the population, resident Asians and Pacific Islanders have grown 79%. The 2000 Census is expected to show these trends continuing.



Racial and ethnic diversity creates character and adds cultural opportunities to the fabric of our communities. St. Louis County must become increasingly sensitive and responsive to the increase in minority populations, for some of this population will require specialized needs and services, including language classes, job skills training, transportation, and other services.

**! Housing**

With more than 400,000 homes, St. Louis County affords residents a diversity of types, ages, styles, and neighborhoods to choose from. Nearly 75% of the housing, or 380,110 units, in St. Louis County are owner-occupied. By 1990, 66% of the County's housing units were at least twenty years old.

**, Housing Maintenance**

In some older parts of the County, neighborhoods have experienced decline and disinvestment. Older housing units require more maintenance than newer homes and often do not have the features desired by home buyers. Home maintenance is a major issue since a large percentage of aging homes correlate with the highest concentration of residents over 65 years of age. Fixed-income elderly households can be unable, financially and physically, to maintain their homes and will require assistance. Pro-active code enforcement is a vital part of maintaining aging homes and neighborhoods, but code enforcement alone is not the answer. More resources will be needed in the form of assistance to those who cannot afford, or are incapable of maintaining their homes, in order to improve the quality of mature housing in St. Louis County.

Older housing must be made as desirable as newer construction in order to compete in today's housing markets and into the future. If reinvestment and rehabilitation of the mature housing stock are ignored, deterioration of homes and neighborhoods will worsen, and newer, more functional housing typically located in outlying counties will continue to be preferred.

**, Housing Development**

Most of the County's housing was built during

the era of suburbanization that began in the mid-1940s with the end of World War II. The largest component of housing stock in the County was constructed in the 1960s. Housing development continued to thrive in the 1970s and 1980s, but with a greater proportion of multi-family units being built than in earlier decades. During the 1980s, there was a net increase of approximately 40,000 housing units. In the 1990s, housing development in St. Louis County proceeded at a relatively steady rate, though annual housing construction has been only about half of what it was in the late 1980s due to a decrease in the amount of easily developable land. Following a low of 144 permits issued in 1994, multi-family development has grown in the latter half of the 1990s. Without large tracts of vacant land, new housing development has been limited to small subdivisions and in-fill sites.

**, Housing Values**

In St. Louis County, homes with the highest value are primarily located in a corridor westward through the middle of the County from the City of Clayton to the City of Wildwood. Generally, less expensive, smaller homes are concentrated in older, inner-ring communities adjacent to

<b>Residential Permits Issued in St. Louis County, 1998</b>		
<b>Unincorporated</b>	Single Family	1653
	Multi-Family	408
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2061</b>
<b>Incorporated</b>	Single-Family	799
	Multi-Family	335
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1134</b>
<b>Total County</b>	Single-Family	2452
	Multi-Family	743
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3195</b>
Source: St. Louis County Department of Planning, Division of Research and Statistics 2/9/99		

the City of St. Louis and in North County. Census tracts with higher housing values located in the northern and southern areas of the County have experienced large increases in the number of units over the past ten years. According to the St. Louis County Assessor's Office, the 1997 average appraised value for homes in St. Louis County was \$117,296.

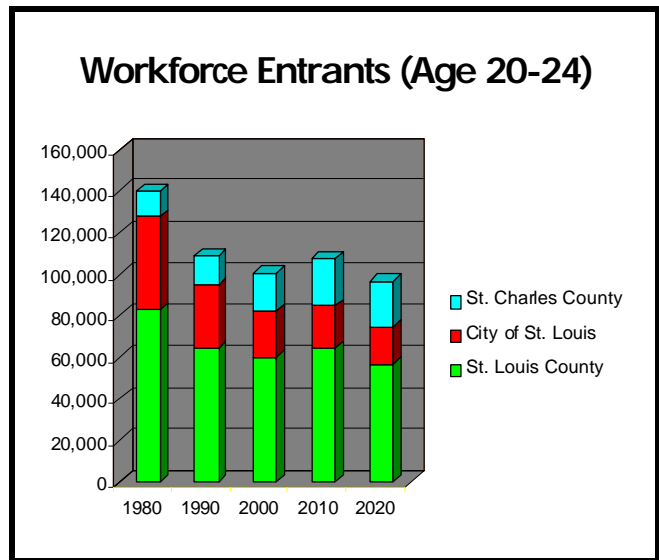
**! Income**

In 1989, St. Louis County ranked eighth in household income among all counties in the nation with populations over 800,000. St. Louis County is the most affluent county in the metropolitan area and in the State of Missouri with a 1989 per capita income of \$18,625. However, wide variations in income levels exist within the County. Municipal per capita income can range from \$4,831 in Wellston and \$5,569 in Kinloch to \$74,806 and \$86,978 in Westwood and Country Life Acres, respectively. The Missouri State Data Center estimates that only 5% of St. Louis County residents live in poverty.

**! Economy**

St. Louis County has been described as the "economic engine" of the region. In 1997, St. Louis County had about half of the metropolitan area's jobs and the largest residential labor force in the region. On the state level, the County contains about one-fourth of all jobs in Missouri. The County has also been an attractive location to a number of major employers. Since jobs typically follow people, St. Louis County's employment boom corresponded with the County's years of residential growth from the 1950s to the 1980s.

As residential growth stabilizes, so too could economic growth. As the County's vacant land diminishes, the redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial sites is expected to increase, as opposed to new construction. Employment opportunities are beginning to follow population and new development to outlying counties. Places of employment are now further away from the inner-ring communities and harder to access for low-income individuals, individuals who do not own automobiles, and elderly and teenagers who are unable to drive automobiles.



The difficulty in accessing jobs will impact groups that need jobs the most. St. Louis County will need to develop solutions to link jobs to the people who need to access them.

Among the most important economic issue for St. Louis County in the next decade will be the diminishing supply of new workers entering the job market. With a 19% decrease in the number of residents in their 20s expected between 1990 and 2000, employers may find it difficult to fill entry level jobs. Higher levels of education and technical training will be needed by the work force of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Efforts to reduce high minority unemployment will also be important to address.

With a shrinking number of entry level workers combined with a large constituent of "baby boomers" reaching retirement age, St. Louis County's labor market will be impacted by the need for workers. The lack of availability of workers could affect the growth of the local economy, as well as the ability of St. Louis County to compete in the global market. This means St. Louis County will need new and competitive approaches to attract and retain new workforce entrants. Attracting residents early in their economic careers can encourage them to remain for a lifetime. Undoubtedly, job training will be a critical component, as the twenty-first century labor force will need more than a high school diploma and greater technical abilities to meet the complex needs of employers.

## **! Transportation**

St. Louis County contains more than 4,800 miles of public roads including interstate and state highways, County arterials and local roads. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic, and municipalities are responsible for different portions of the road system.

Traditional commuting patterns which focused on the downtown central business district have changed in the St. Louis region and in the nation as a whole. Today, nearly 70% of the people who live in St. Louis County also work in the County. While the traditional commute to downtown has decreased, the number of "cross county" commuters has dramatically increased. Since the vast majority of County residents drive alone to work, it is not surprising that traffic congestion, road maintenance, and improved public transit are important to County residents. Despite an increase in tele-commuting, these issues are likely to remain important to County residents in the near future.

## **! Multiple-Jurisdictions**

St. Louis County is a community of "hometowns" - a big place, with a small town feel. St. Louis County contains ninety-one municipalities and a large unincorporated area containing 1/3 of the County's total population. Approximately 66% of the County's residents live in municipalities, ranging in size from 11 residents in the Village of Champ to 54,000 residents in the City of Florissant. Local government service delivery in St. Louis County is divided among more than 200 political jurisdictions including St. Louis County, ninety-one municipalities, twenty-three school districts, and forty-three municipal fire departments and protection districts.

St. Louis County government plays a dual role in terms of service delivery. It provides county-type services to the entire County, including road maintenance, revenue collection, public health services, and the jail. The County also provides municipal-type services to unincorporated areas, such as zoning, police protection, and public works. In addition, the County also makes several services available to municipalities on a contractual basis, since municipal governments vary in the services

provided to their residents. Some provide minimal services and may contract with other municipalities, the County, or private contractors to meet their needs. As a result, it is often unclear to County residents who is responsible for delivering which services.

While a large number of local governments may help ensure that governance is closer and more accountable to its citizens, a vast and overlapping array of public sector units and taxing authorities may also fragment decision-making processes and inhibit cooperative regional initiatives and resource-sharing in the public sector.

## **! Region At A Glance**

St. Louis County is not an island. Its past, present, and future are closely linked to that of the St. Louis metropolitan region. St. Louis County is one of the twelve counties that comprise the Bi-state metropolitan region - seven counties in Missouri and five counties in Illinois. With a 1997 population estimated at 2.56 million, the St. Louis metropolitan region is ranked the 18<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. Positioned at the center of the region, St. Louis County's population comprised 40% of the bi-state population in 1990.

## **! Regional Planning and Growth Management**

The St. Louis region is one of the top-five most rapidly "sprawling" metropolitan areas in the country, according to The Pierce Report, a 1997 study of the St. Louis region by urban experts Neil Pierce and Curtis Johnson. The Pierce Report indicated that since 1950, the City of St. Louis has lost 58% of its population, while the region has subsidized a thinly spread pattern of suburban growth. While the entire 12-county St. Louis metropolitan region grew just 35% from 1950 to 1990, the amount of developed land soared 355%. The massive loss of population from the center city, the shifting growth from inner-ring St. Louis County suburbs to outlying areas, and the rapid growth and development further away from the metropolitan core will have severe consequences for St. Louis County if the pattern continues in the future.



## Citizen Telephone Survey

In February 1999, Attitude Research Company (ARC) completed work on a sample telephone survey of 617 randomly selected residents in St. Louis County on behalf of the Department of Planning. The telephone survey was administered to 303 people living in unincorporated St. Louis County and 314 people living in municipalities within the County. The margin of error for the sample size in unincorporated St. Louis County was +/- 5.6%, and the margin of error for the municipal sample was +/- 5.5%.

The purpose of the telephone survey was to gather data from County residents, focusing on service delivery. Specifically, the survey was developed to measure satisfaction with various services provided by the County, to understand awareness of the County's role in providing these services, and to determine demand for other possible services the County might provide. The following is a summary of the survey results.

### ! Direction of St. Louis County

Overall, the survey results indicated that St. Louis County was moving in the right direction. Over 70% of the survey respondents expressed high levels of optimism about the general direction of St. Louis County. When broken down by unincorporated area or municipality, even larger numbers, in excess of 76% of survey respondents, felt their area of the County or city was moving in the right direction.

Most County residents were not worried about a possible decline in their property values or about crime moving into their area. Approximately one-third of respondents answered that these were concerns.

Various problems facing the County were tested, and respondents ranked the seriousness of each problem. The most serious problem, according to 59% of respondents, is the lack of cooperation between St. Louis City and St. Louis County. A majority also answered that the highway system is inadequate for morning and evening commutes. Smaller percentages, near 40%, were concerned with urban sprawl, government fragmentation, and the excessive number of municipalities in the County. Limited airport capacity fell in the middle of the list, as did poor residential street maintenance and inadequate health care for the poor. Falling at the bottom of the list in terms of respondents' concerns were racial relations, inadequate stormwater control, and poor air quality. Only 30% answered that these were serious problems.

Possible methods for improving St. Louis County were tested. The number one priority according to 82% of the respondents was providing top-notch recreation centers for all areas of the County. Large majorities also named curbside recycling in unincorporated areas as a high priority. This is supported by only 52% of survey participants wanting trash service to be bid out for unincorporated areas so that collection would be provided by a single carrier within each neighborhood or subdivision.

## DIRECTION OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Survey Response	St. Louis County as a Whole		Specific Unincorporated Area or Municipality	
	Unincorporated	Incorporated	Unincorporated	Incorporated
<b>Right direction</b>	<b>74.9%</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>78.2%</b>	<b>76.8%</b>
Mixed opinion	8.6%	12.7%	5.3%	9.9%
Wrong direction	13.5%	12.1%	15.5%	10.8%
Other / Don't know	3.0%	4.5%	1.0%	2.5%

When asked about countywide planning, responses differed based on the wording of the question. A significant majority, 73% of unincorporated residents and 62% of incorporated residents, felt that St. Louis County should have more authority over countywide planning. However, only slightly more than half of both unincorporated and incorporated residents agreed that “giving the County more authority over individual municipalities for comprehensive planning” was a good idea. In other words, planning is good, but not at the expense of the autonomy of individual municipalities.

Finally, there was not overwhelming support for incorporating all of St. Louis County. Only 36% of unincorporated respondents wanted all unincorporated portions of St. Louis County to become part of a municipality, and only 51% of incorporated residents indicated that full incorporation was preferred.

### **! Ballot Proposals and Initiatives**

In a series of questions designed to test reactions to possible ballot proposals, expanding MetroLink and Lambert Airport were seen as higher priorities than providing more open park land and green space or reducing the number of municipalities in St. Louis County. Expanding the MetroLink light rail system was very popular among both incorporated and unincorporated residents. More than eight in ten respondents favored such a proposal, and only about one in ten opposed it. A proposal to expand Lambert Airport to the northwest by adding a third runway and new terminal space was popular with 62% of the respondents. Park and recreational opportunities also received strong support with 61% of respondents indicating that they would support a ballot proposal to increase sales tax for parks and recreation. Only one-third of the respondents would oppose such an increase.

When questioned about possible initiatives, survey respondents indicated that they would be supportive of those that create more jobs and curb urban sprawl. Over 70% thought that government should make it a priority to provide more jobs through economic development. Approximately 62% felt that something should be done to halt the pace of urban sprawl. Initiatives getting less approval from survey respondents included providing more park

land and open space and reducing the number of municipalities in the County.

### **! Quality of Services**

Almost 65% of respondents felt that they receive an excellent value in service for the taxes they pay to St. Louis County. When evaluating specific public services, police protection topped the list with more than nine in ten answering that they thought police protection in the County was “excellent” or “good”. County parks and recreation programs followed at a close second, with more than eight in ten answering that services were “excellent” or “good.” Majorities were also satisfied with stormwater control; repair and maintenance of County roads, bridges, and subdivision streets; trash collection; and snow removal. The only two services with which majorities were dissatisfied were economic development to create jobs and curbside recycling.

Respondents were also asked about the difference in the quality of services between unincorporated and incorporated areas of St. Louis County. Slightly over half of the respondents from unincorporated St. Louis County answered that their services were as good as those in most municipalities. Only 40% of incorporated residents agreed that unincorporated services were as good. When asked the question in a slightly different way, less than half of unincorporated residents agreed that “people who live in municipalities in St. Louis County tend to receive better services than those who live in unincorporated areas,” while only a slight majority, or 55%, of people living in municipalities agreed with the statement. In other words, people living in municipalities are more likely to believe that they receive better services than those living in unincorporated areas.

### **! Communication**

Two-thirds of respondents, both in unincorporated and incorporated, answered that the County does an “excellent” or “good” job keeping them informed about County matters. Around 37% did not feel they were kept well-informed about County activities. Over 45% of the survey respondents indicated that their primary source for receiving information on St. Louis County was the newspaper. Television was a close second at 44%.

Support was high for publishing a newsletter to keep residents informed about the County. Only one-fourth of survey respondents were opposed to such a newsletter. Even when cost was explicitly introduced into the wording of the question, a majority still wanted the newsletter to be published quarterly, with significant numbers also preferring twice a year.

## ! Impressions of St. Louis County Government Facilities

Turning to County facilities, a majority had never been to the County Courts building or to the Administration building in downtown Clayton. However, near 80% of survey respondents had gone to County operated parks. Surprisingly, there is no statistically significant difference between park attendance for residents living in incorporated or unincorporated areas. Also, one-third of survey respondents indicated that they have been to Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield.

The phrases that respondents thought were the most descriptive of County offices were “very friendly and helpful” and “modern and up-to-date facilities.” A majority also felt the County offices were “very efficient and business-like,” but “difficult because of parking problems.” Four in ten thought the phrase “long lines and long waits” was descriptive, and a similar amount felt the offices were “too impersonal and bureaucratic.”



## SWOT Analysis

In strategic planning, a tool commonly used to gather input is the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, or a

SWOT Analysis. The purpose of using SWOT Analysis for the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan was to aid in the development of the strategic issues to be addressed by St. Louis County government over the next five years. By identifying the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats facing both St. Louis County as a place, and St. Louis County government as an organization, the strategic issues that the County should direct and align resources

towards will emerge. In order to obtain diverse input, a SWOT Analysis was conducted by County officials and key staff at the retreat, as well as the general public at the community forums.

## ! County Government SWOT Analysis

The Strategic Plan consultants, Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis, conducted a SWOT analysis at the St. Louis County Government Retreat on February 26, 1999. Elected officials, department directors, and key staff were divided into four small groups of 10-12 persons and paired with a consultant to act as a neutral facilitator. Each small group performed a series of exercises in which group members listed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County as a place (external) and St. Louis County government (internal). After all of the input was received, individuals voted on their top preferences in order to obtain group consensus on the most critical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County. Finally, the four groups final results were compared, and a number of consistent themes and issues emerged.

### Strengths

Externally, the strengths of St. Louis County as a place named by County officials and staff were very similar to those named by citizens participating in the focus groups and telephone survey conducted by Attitude Research Company (ARC). Quality of life issues were mentioned by all of the small discussion groups as strengths, including affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, well regarded school districts, and cultural amenities. Additionally, the central location of St. Louis within the region and nation, and the favorable business climate of St. Louis County were also mentioned as strengths.

When groups were asked to list internal strengths of St. Louis County government, over 65 were mentioned. The three most common internal strengths were professional staff, fiscally sound, and well-managed government, with every group listing well-managed government as a strength. Other internal strengths included innovative approaches, established history of well-run government, and business-oriented government.

**Weaknesses**

The small discussion groups listed over 70 external weaknesses facing St. Louis County as a place. Although there was variance among the weaknesses listed by the groups, there were three common issues: poverty of inner ring areas, parochial and non-regional thinking, and multiplicity of local governments.

The internal weaknesses named by the small discussion groups tended to be very specific in nature rather than broad and general, which is most likely due to the fact that the participants had a very intimate knowledge of County government. The common issues mentioned were lack of funding, internal communications, and lack of mission.

**Opportunities**

When discussing the external opportunities for St. Louis County, many small group participants named ways to turn the weaknesses into opportunities. For example, while parochialism and non-regional thinking was mentioned as a weakness, participants thought that St. Louis County should take the opportunity to be a leader in supporting stronger regional planning. The top three opportunities mentioned by the groups were expanding mass transit, supporting change for stronger regional planning, and providing technical assistance to other areas and governments in the region.

For internal opportunities, group participants listed ways in which St. Louis County could be more efficient and effective. Many participants agreed that the County needs to better utilize technology to improve communications and services to its citizens. Participants also strongly felt that St. Louis County should assist in the consolidation of governments to eliminate duplication of resources and services. The third most named opportunity was to provide employee incentives. Group participants recognized the importance of attracting and retaining quality employees for St. Louis County government.

**Threats**

Many of the issues listed as external weaknesses

**SWOT RESULTS FROM COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**Strengths**

- External - St. Louis County as a Place
  - T Good quality of life
  - T Safe neighborhoods
  - T Educational opportunities, good school districts

Internal - St. Louis County as a Government

- T Employee strength, tenure, and skills
- T Fiscally sound, AAA bond rating
- T Professionally managed organization

**Weaknesses**

- External - St. Louis County as a Place
  - T Parochialism, NIMBYism, non-regional attitude
  - T Extreme poverty in inner ring
  - T Multiplicity of local governments and organizations

Internal - St. Louis County as a Government

- T Decreasing funds
- T Internal communications
- T Lack of direction, mission, and priorities

**Opportunities**

- External - St. Louis County as a Place
  - T Increase mass transit
  - T Support change for stronger regional planning
  - T Provide technical assistance to other areas and governments

Internal - St. Louis County as a Government

- T Utilize technology better to increase efficiency
- T Consolidate governments to reduce duplication
- T Provide better employee incentives

**Threats**

- External - St. Louis County as a Place
  - T Economic downturns
  - T Closures and relocations of major industries and businesses
  - T Decay and fiscal drain of the City of St. Louis

Internal - St. Louis County as a Government

- T Resistance to change
- T Partisan politics
- T Loss of revenue

were brought up again as threats. Small group participants agreed that economic downturns were the greatest external threat facing St. Louis County. More specifically, groups mentioned major business and industrial closures and relocations. Group participants also identified the decline and fiscal drain that the City of St. Louis places on St. Louis County as an external threat.

Internally, group participants felt the greatest threat to St. Louis County government was resistance to change. Partisan politics were also mentioned as a threat because they can prevent action from occurring. Reducing economic resources was also mentioned several times as an internal threat, but in different variations, such as recessions and annexations.

## **! Citizen SWOT Analysis**

Over 150 St. Louis County residents participated in nine community forums held throughout the County in April 1999. After viewing an informational video about the County, participants were divided into small groups and paired with a neutral facilitator from FOCUS St. Louis to complete a SWOT Analysis. Each small group listed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County. The results of the SWOT Analysis from the nine community forums follows.

### **, Strengths**

Community forum participants listed many strengths that St. Louis County can build upon. The most frequent strength named by the small groups was the economy. Participants frequently mentioned the diversity of the economy, number of employment opportunities, low unemployment rate, strong economic base, and the high tax base as strengths of St. Louis County. Another strength frequently mentioned was the cultural and social amenities of St. Louis County, including libraries, parks, museums, shopping centers, restaurants, and the zoo.

The quality of life in St. Louis County was also a top strength. Participants commented on the strong school systems, healthy neighborhoods, ethnic diversity, low crime, abundance of churches, community pride, and other factors

that contribute to St. Louis County as a good place to live, work, and raise a family.

Transportation was also often named as a strength of St. Louis County in terms of MetroLink and accessibility to major highways. Transportation, however, is an unusual topic, for it was by far the most frequently mentioned overall issue at all of the community forums, and was named as a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat depending on how the individual felt about the issue. For example, those residents satisfied with the current MetroLink system named it as a strength, while those who feel it is inadequate considered MetroLink a weakness. Additionally, residents who would like to see MetroLink expanded, named it as an opportunity. Conversely, the residents who oppose MetroLink listed it as a threat.

### **, Weaknesses**

Community forum participants were very vocal about the weaknesses of St. Louis County. Transportation issues were named as the top weakness of St. Louis County, with discussion groups expressing concern over inadequate funding for public transit, lack of public transit, need for sidewalks, poor street maintenance, traffic congestion, and aging infrastructure.

The discussion groups also felt strongly about the lack of leadership and the failure to think regionally as weaknesses of St. Louis County. Several participants also stated that governmental fragmentation and the parochialism between governments were weaknesses of St. Louis County. While some participants felt that the entire County should be come incorporated, and others felt that the municipalities should be consolidated, the general feeling was that lack of leadership in addressing the abundance of governments was a major weakness of St. Louis County.

Additionally, the environment, urban sprawl, and redevelopment issues were also frequently mentioned as weaknesses at the community forums. With respect to the environment, residents named air quality and loss of open

space as weaknesses. Issues related to urban sprawl, such as uncontrolled development; strains on land, infrastructure, and services; “leap frog” growth; and population shifting west and south were considered weaknesses of St. Louis County. Redevelopment was frequently mentioned as a weakness in terms of not capitalizing on the potential of reinvesting in older communities.

**Opportunities**

The opportunities for St. Louis County most frequently mentioned by community forum participants were redevelopment, coordination between governments, communication, transportation, and financing. Redevelopment was considered an opportunity by the largest number of community forum participants. Participants commented that St. Louis County is a good location for economic development, and that the County should redevelop that land it has and rebuild in older areas. Specifically, enhancing the existing buildings and infrastructure of inner-ring suburbs was mentioned as an opportunity.

Another key opportunity identified by community forum participants was coordination between governments. Discussion groups mentioned consolidation of small municipalities, integration of municipal and regional services, and cooperative land use planning. Overall, a key opportunity was to form a partnership between municipalities and St. Louis County to address localized issues. Specifically, several participants thought closer cooperation with the City of St. Louis would be an opportunity to better coordinate government resources.

Improving communication from St. Louis County government to residents was an opportunity recognized by community forum participants. Participants thought that producing a newsletter for unincorporated areas and increasing the number and frequency of forums for public education would provide better public relations between the county and its residents.

As explained previously, transportation was the issue discussed by the most participants at the

community forums. Transportation was named as an opportunity for St. Louis County to provide adequate public transportation, construct more sidewalks, improve road conditions, and further the development of transportation alternatives to the automobile. However, the most frequently mentioned transportation opportunity was MetroLink expansion.

Community forum participants named financing as an opportunity for St. Louis County. Specifically, bond issues, joint public financing, low-cost home improvement loans from local banks, private investment, and aggressive grant seeking from federal and state sources were identified as financing opportunities for St. Louis County.

**SWOT RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY FORUMS**

**Strengths**

- T Economy
- T Cultural and social amenities
- T Quality of life
- T Transportation

**Weaknesses**

- T Transportation
- T Lack of leadership
- T Poor environmental conditions
- T Urban Sprawl
- T Lack of redevelopment

**Opportunities**

- T Redevelopment
- T Coordination between governments
- T Communication
- T Transportation
- T Financing

**Threats**

- T Transportation
- T Lack of cooperation between governments
- T Urban sprawl
- T Lack of redevelopment and reinvestment strategies

### , Threats

Again, the widely discussed transportation issue was the most frequently named threat facing St. Louis County at the community forums. Discussion groups named congestion, lack of transportation planning, deteriorating infrastructure, deferred road maintenance, and not taking initiative to build first-rate transit system as threats.

Another top threat to the County was the lack of cooperation and coordination between governments. The lack of political partnerships causes stagnation and partisan bickering, and ultimately inefficient government. Specifically, community forum participants felt that the multiplicity of governments, competition among municipalities, overall lack of leadership, and poorly governed municipalities were threats to St. Louis County.

Urban sprawl was also identified by community forum participants as a threat to St. Louis County. Discussion groups listed haphazard growth without a regional plan, loss of open space, decreasing population as people relocate to neighboring counties, and subsidizing St. Charles County development as threats.

Going hand-in-hand with urban sprawl, is the lack of redevelopment and reinvestment in St. Louis County. Community forum participants indicated that deteriorating neighborhoods, declining property values, poor allocation of development resources, and failure to recognize and act on the needs of mature communities, are threats to St. Louis County. Participants also felt that the lack of a pro-active approach to dealing with redevelopment and reinvestment was a major threat, particularly in relation to code enforcement and abandoned/vacant properties.

### , Community Forum Critical Issues

After participants listed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, they were asked to individually select what they felt were the most critical issues facing St. Louis County. The top three issues selected by community forum participants were

redevelopment/reinvestment, transportation, and regional leadership. Issues that were not determined to be critical for St. Louis County to address included parks, the environment, and health services.



### Citizen Input

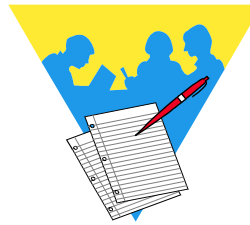
In addition to the community forums, St. Louis County residents were afforded the opportunity to provide input into the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan via e-mail, telephone hotline, and conventional mail. Approximately 250 residents used these methods to contribute their thoughts. Citizen input covered a gamut of issues, including personal property taxes, Y2K, flooding, Section 8 housing, recycling, urban sprawl, trash service, and school funding.

Overwhelmingly, citizen input focused on transportation issues. Similar to the input from the community forums, MetroLink expansion was desired by many residents. Over 25% of the transportation input was comments from citizens in favor of expanding MetroLink to all areas of St. Louis County. The need to construct more sidewalks and bike trails was also frequently mentioned by citizens. Other transportation input included the need to extend Interstate 170, install sound walls, address congestion, and improve aging roadways. Lambert Airport expansion was also a concern for several citizens.

After transportation, the next issue receiving the most citizen feedback was taxes. Tax issues did not come out strongly in the telephone survey or SWOT Analysis, but did so through citizen comments via e-mail, telephone hotline, and conventional mail primarily because a 2000-2004 Strategic Plan informational flyer was included in the personal property tax bills mailed to over 400,000 households. The majority of the comments from citizens expressed a desire to eliminate personal property taxes. Many also commented that personal property taxes for people aged 65 and older should be eliminated or reduced since many elderly individuals are constrained by fixed incomes.

Other top issues identified by citizen comments were the environment and government consolidation. With respect to the environment, several citizens indicated that preserving open space and creating more park and recreational facilities should be a priority of St. Louis County. On consolidation, half of the citizen comments focused on the need to consolidate municipalities to reduce the number of governments in St. Louis County. Other citizens indicated that they would like the municipalities, the City of St. Louis, and the County to work cooperatively to solve shared issues.

Citizen comments also focused on education and urban sprawl. Citizens expressed an interest in restructuring funding for education to make it more equitable. With regard to urban sprawl, there were many comments about stopping the spread of population to outlying counties, as well as the need for a comprehensive land use plan to address sprawl related issues, such as the loss of open space and traffic congestion.



## Summary of Input

Over 1,000 individuals, including County government employees, elected officials, citizens, businesses, and other key stakeholders, provided input into the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan. The feedback gained from the trend analysis, telephone survey, community forums, and citizen input via e-mail, telephone hotline, and conventional mail was assessed to determine the

most critical issues to be addressed by the 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan. Unlike past plans, the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan narrowed the list of critical issues facing St. Louis County to four strategic issues to concentrate resources and efforts over the next five years. The four strategic issues are:

- ! **County's Role in the Region**
- ! **Reinvestment in Older Communities**
- ! **Transportation**
- ! **Unincorporated Services**

## DETERMINING THE STRATEGIC ISSUES

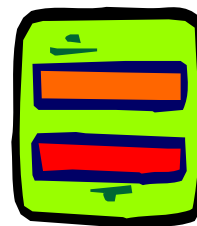
### Input from:

- ' County government employees
- ' Elected officials
- ' Citizens
- ' Businesses
- ' Organizations and Agencies
- ' Other key stakeholders



### Methods used:

- ' Trend analysis
- ' Telephone survey
- ' SWOT Analysis
- ' Community forums
- ' E-mail and conventional mail
- ' Telephone hotline

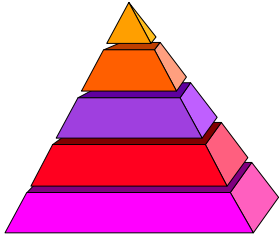


### Strategic Issues:

- County's Role in the Region
- Reinvestment in Older Communities
- Transportation
- Unincorporated Services

# General Action Recommendations

A strategic plan focuses on how an organization responds to the issues it faces. The following recommendations are designed to help St. Louis County government align its organization, resources, policies, and practices with the issues raised during the strategic planning process. These recommended actions are overarching, intending to cut across all aspects of County government.



## Organizational Structure of St. Louis County Government

St. Louis County's physical development since World War II has followed a path of new growth and development so that today there is a full range of land uses supporting the high quality of life in the County. However, St. Louis County government still retains most of the same organizational structure that facilitated the growth and prosperity. Maintaining that prosperity and finding new avenues of growth may take a different organizational structure.

Even the changing nature of the St. Louis region's transportation network may require a different organizational response from County government. County residents and businesses tend to view transportation as more than streets and highways. The public's interest in expanding MetroLink, finding alternatives to the automobile, and recognizing that transportation is related to job growth and revitalization, all point to a broader, more holistic view of the issue.

Providing local government services to County residents in unincorporated communities has long been a responsibility of County government. As unincorporated areas have become more established and matured over the years, their service needs have changed. Coupled with the impact of annexations and incorporations, St. Louis County government needs to be an organization that can maintain and deliver a flexible set of services and improve responsiveness to constituents.

Finally, as the most populous County in greater St. Louis and the location of the largest number of jobs, the region looks to St. Louis County for leadership,

guidance, stability, and creativity. The County's role in the region is vitally important to the quality of life in all jurisdictions in both states. St. Louis County government should be structured to reflect this external role.

### Actions to Address County Government's Organizational Issues

- **Consolidation of departments and agencies** to better respond to the strategic issues identified in this plan should be examined. Shifting divisions or sections from some departments to more appropriate locations in other departments should be considered.
- **Creation of formal relationships of key departments and agencies** around the strategic issues should be explored. Short of consolidation, standing committees or work groups could address specific strategies identified in this plan.
- **Developing strategic plans within each department** of St. Louis County government is a logical next step. Department plans should be linked to this Strategic Plan and demonstrate how the four key strategic issues will be addressed. To date, the St. Louis County Economic Council, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Health have strategic plans.



## Expanded Communications With County Citizens

Throughout the planning process, the need for greater links between citizens, businesses, municipalities, and other organizations and County

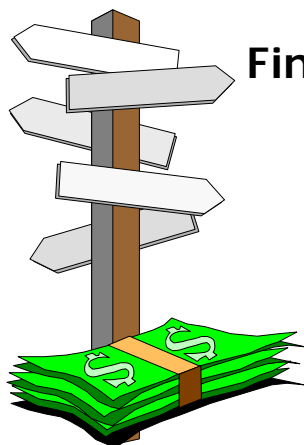
government was raised. Government officials discussed it during the retreat. Community forum participants voiced their desire for more information and ways to have input. Telephone survey and focus group respondents rated improved communications as very important. Clearly, this is an issue that cuts across all County departments. Given major enhancements in communications technology, links with the citizens should and can be readily expanded.

### Actions to Address Communication

- ' **An overall communications plan for St. Louis County government** should be created to address the best ways to get information to County citizens, as well as how best to get their input. Such a plan should explore the use of newsletters, other direct mail options, surveys, new technologies and other creative means.
- ' **Responsiveness to citizens' questions, concerns, and service requests should be improved.** Extensive customer training for employees, as well as better use of new technologies should be examined.
- ' **Continue to improve and expand upon St. Louis County's current website, [www.stlouisco.com](http://www.stlouisco.com),** with easy links to the various departments, services, and, very importantly, to other jurisdictions providing the services requested by citizens.



- ' **Access to information for citizens should be made easier.** Through the use of e-mail and voice mail, citizens could leave comments and questions at any time of the day while also receiving pre-recorded information on frequently asked questions. These options should complement, not replace, personal contact with the public.
- ' **A separate annual report on the progress of the Strategic Plan** should be published. The report would reinforce the value of planning in improving St. Louis County's quality of life while also motivating County officials to follow through on the plan's adopted policies and actions.



## Financing Changes and Growth in St. Louis County

None of the general action recommendations or outcomes and strategies of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan come free of charge over the next five years. Most will likely involve shifting resources within

County government and within departments in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Others will require new sources of funding, some of which are identified in the Strategic Plan. Linking departmental budgets to the Strategic Plan and its priorities is critical to implementation. This complex process can be expected to occur over the life of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.

## Actions for Funding

- ' **Existing resources should be analyzed annually to determine if they support the desired outcomes of the plan.** Consideration should be given to reallocating existing resources to fund strategic priorities.
- ' **Additional resources needed to implement the Strategic Plan should be identified.** Possible sources of funding might include creating new taxes and fees, pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic grants, and, if necessary, raising existing taxes and fees. Continually enhancing the County's tax base, as well as improving efficiencies should be pursued as well.
- ' **Funding for capital improvements should be a priority.** The identified strategic issues raise the need for a countywide capital improvement plan, possibly funded by a bond issue. County voters last approved a general bond issue for streets, parks, and other improvements in 1986. With its AAA bond rating, St. Louis County is in an excellent position to evaluate this option.



## Recognizing the Diversity of St. Louis County's Population

St. Louis County, like other parts of the country, has become more diverse in the last 25 years. The County's growth has included persons of all races and ethnic backgrounds, and the rate of increase appears to continue to grow. Given these changes, St. Louis County must become increasingly sensitive and responsive to the changing faces, cultures, and languages of County citizens.

## Actions to Address Diversity

- ' **St. Louis County's ability to be inclusive will set an example for others.** Policies and practices to promote diversity should be reviewed, developed, and implemented.
- ' **Increase the level of awareness and expertise within County government to assist residents and neighborhoods** in addressing diversity issues. Additional training, partnering with organizations with the needed expertise, or designating community liaisons should be considered.
- ' **Engage regional organizations, community leaders, and citizens in round table discussions and other activities** to break down racial and ethnic barriers in the County's communities. Historic obstacles must be removed throughout the region to assure equal opportunity for every citizen.
- ' **Continue tracking and reporting minority participation in County Government** including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of staff, as well as the appointment of representatives to County boards and commissions.

# Strategic Issue: St. Louis County's Role in the Region



## Trends Impacting the County's Role In The Region

Our region is often poorly defined. Some consider the St. Louis region as just the combination of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Others think of the region in terms of the Missouri seven counties that comprise the Metro West. Metro East residents in Illinois feel as though they are included as part of the region as well.

St. Louis County is the population and employment center for the region. As such, St. Louis County has a certain responsibility for regional leadership.

The region contains the fifth highest number of local governments in the nation with 771 units of local government. When considering taxing authority, the St. Louis region jumps to the highest in the nation at 26.8 taxing units per 100,000 people.



## Perspectives on the County's Role in the Region

Regional leadership was identified as an opportunity for the County to pursue in the next five years by County officials and the general public .

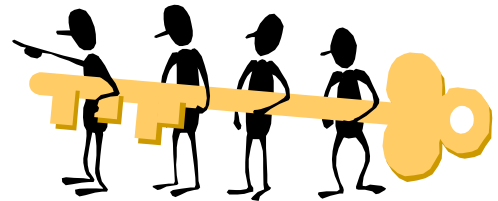
Nearly 40% of residents surveyed were concerned with government fragmentation and too many cities in the County.

The most serious problem identified by the public opinion survey was the lack of cooperation between the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County.

A significant majority of residents felt that St. Louis

County should have more authority over County-wide planning. There was support for stronger regional planning and the creation of a plan to control growth and sprawl.

## Key Themes from the County's Role in the Region



- ' Leadership and vision must be strengthened to address issues of regional importance in the bi-state metropolitan area. Although many excellent leaders in business, government, and civic organizations exist, few evaluate regional impacts and make decisions of regional significance.
- ' With the significant number of governments in the region, collaboration is needed to effectively address issues of regional impact.
- ' The region should continue to pursue shared bases of funding in order to collaboratively support regional functions. Shared revenue successfully supports the TWA Dome, Lambert Airport, and the Zoo-Museum District. Other regional initiatives present opportunities for revenue sharing.
- ' Continued enhancement of education, skills, and job training is a regional issue in order to keep the St. Louis area a competitive player in the market.
- ' There is a need for greater regional planning to address the sustainability of our region. A single county or jurisdiction cannot be successful without partnerships and overall leadership.

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# Introduction: The Case for St. Louis County's Role in the Region

As a major governing body in the St. Louis region, St. Louis County has a significant leadership role to play. The County is the biggest single political jurisdiction in the metropolitan area and in the State of Missouri. It ranks among the very few in the United States with a AAA bond rating. Whether or not the County desires a regional leadership role, it is looked to by other parts of the region for guidance, example, and resources.

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What is the current role of St. Louis County as a regional leader, and what could its future role be? The topic of St. Louis County's role in the region is one of four critical issues that were identified through government input and citizen engagement phases of the 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan. This issue paper is meant to help facilitate a discussion about the topic of the County's role in the region. The issue paper will focus on how St. Louis County can strengthen its role as a regional leader with respect to the key issues of regional planning, growth management, diversity, and coordination between governmental entities. Each of these key issues emerged repeatedly during the strategic plan information gathering process.

For the purposes of this issue paper, the following definitions of terms are offered for clarification:

## St. Louis Region / Metropolitan Region

The bi-state, twelve county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), including the City of St. Louis and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, Lincoln, Warren, and Jefferson in Missouri, and the counties of St. Clair, Madison, Monroe, Jersey and Clinton in Illinois.

## Region

"A central core city and its contiguous suburbs and future growth areas, or a rural area that is commonly influenced or impacted by crosscutting economic, physical, and social development challenges" (Dodge, 1996, page 38).

## Leadership

Exercising initiative and innovation, taking risks, demonstrating results, and implementing and maintaining disciplined accountability measures.

## Growth Management / Urban Sprawl

Although growth management is often the preferred term in academic and professional circles, citizens more commonly use and identify with the term urban sprawl. Throughout the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan input process, the term "urban sprawl" was used by citizens, and was defined differently by those who used it. This issue paper does not attempt to define urban sprawl, but merely uses the term as it was used by the citizens. Thus, for the purposes of this issue paper, the terms urban sprawl and growth management are interchangeable.

The major premise of this issue paper poses the question of what leadership roles St. Louis County can pursue within our metropolitan region. What is not being questioned is St. Louis County's presence as a key player in the region. Because St. Louis County is the most populated county in the State of Missouri and the economic center of the St. Louis Metropolitan region, with both the largest number of jobs and the largest resident labor force, the County is recognized as having a significant role within the region. However, in order to determine what potential leadership roles St. Louis County can play within the region, it is necessary to present background information on St. Louis County and the twelve county metropolitan region for review.

# Background Data and Trends

## St. Louis County Profile

### ! Population

St. Louis County is home to over a million people, making it the most populated county in Missouri with nearly 20% of the state's population. Additionally, St. Louis County has the most affluent population with an average household income nearly \$15,000 higher than the State of Missouri average.

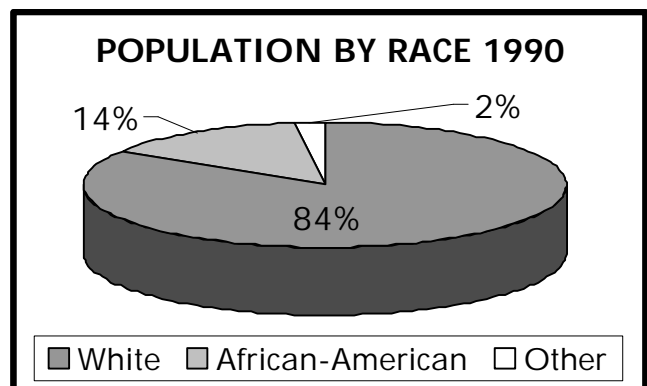
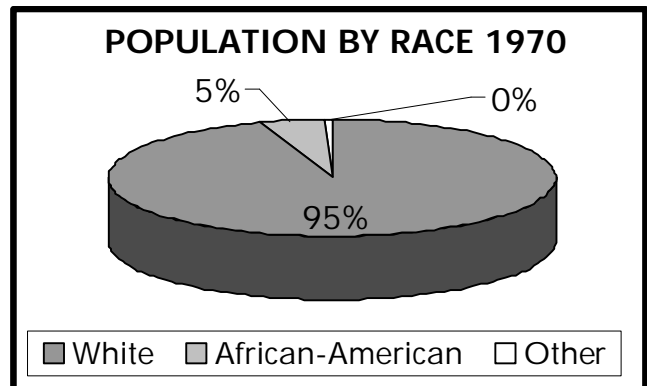
St. Louis County experienced a growth period from 1940 to 1970 primarily due to migration from the City of St. Louis. The County's population grew from 247,000 just before World War II to 951,000 by 1970. Since 1970, however, population growth has stabilized, growing just 2% in the 1980s and an estimated 1.7% in the 1990s. The 1990s also experienced more people moving out of St. Louis County than moving in, due to the growth shift from St. Louis County to the collar counties of St. Charles, Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln, and Warren. This is primarily due to the large tracts of land available for development, and new, affordable housing.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY TOTAL POPULATION 1900-1990		
YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE
1900	50,040	-
1910	82,417	65%
1920	100,737	22%
1930	211,953	110%
1940	274,230	29%
1950	406,230	48%
1960	703,352	73%
1970	951,671	35%
1980	974,180	2%
1990	993,508	2%

The population of St. Louis County has been diversifying since the 1970s. The white population has declined, while the population of Asians and Pacific Islanders has had the highest rate of growth, increasing 79% since 1970. The African American population has also grown significantly due to migration and births, increasing by 27%.

### ! Employment

St. Louis County contains about a quarter of all the jobs in the State of Missouri, and almost half of the jobs in the St. Louis metropolitan region. After a period of significant job growth during the 1980s, employment in St. Louis County decreased marginally during the recession of the early 1990s, and resumed growth in the late 1990s. The County's employment base has become more diverse throughout the 1980s and 1990s as jobs shifted from manufacturing to the service sector. The service sector in St. Louis County experienced the greatest increase in employment between 1987 and 1997, rising from approximately 25% to 33% of all jobs in the County. St. Louis County has



continually had lower unemployment rates than the national and metropolitan region. Since 1993, the County's unemployment rate has been below 4%, and reached an all time low of 2.9% in 1997.

### ! Housing

With more than 400,000 homes, St. Louis County contains a diversity of housing types, ages, and styles. Nearly half of the single-family homes in the County are over 40 years old, and while many older neighborhoods remain attractive, some suffer from deterioration and disinvestment. In general, homes with the greatest value tend to be located in the central corridor of the County, which extends westward from the City of Clayton to the City of Wildwood. Housing in the inner ring, which runs from the City of St. Louis corporate limits to Interstate 170, has experienced the most decline.

New housing development boomed in St. Louis County from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. The past decade has seen a decline in the number of new homes being built, as a result of the diminishing supply of readily developable land. Smaller subdivisions and in-fill development have begun to represent an increasing share of new housing development.

### ! Government

St. Louis County is divided among more than 200 political jurisdictions, including St. Louis County, 91 municipalities, 23 schools districts, and 43 municipal fire departments/protection districts. Approximately 66% of the County's residents live in municipalities, ranging in size from 11 residents in the Village of Champ to 54,000 residents in the City of Florissant. Annexations and incorporations have expanded the population and size of the municipalities, while reducing the unincorporated area of the County.

Municipal services for unincorporated areas are provided by St. Louis County, and in incorporated areas by the respective municipal government. St. Louis County does provide some services, such as police and code enforcement, to municipalities on a contract basis. Service delivery responsibilities vary considerably from municipality to municipality, with some municipalities providing a complete line of services and others providing limited services.

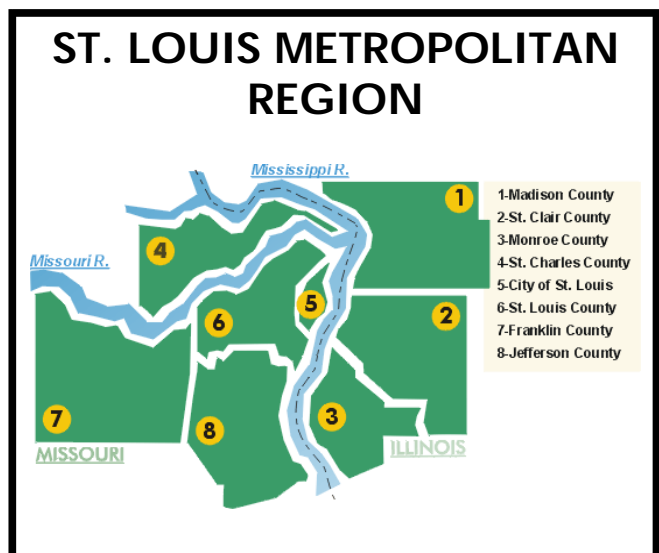
## St. Louis Metropolitan Region Profile

### ! Population

The bi-state metropolitan region consists of City of St. Louis and twelve counties, including the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, Lincoln, Warren, and Jefferson in Missouri, and the counties of St. Clair, Madison, Monroe, Jersey and Clinton in Illinois. The City of St. Louis, the seven Missouri counties, and the five Illinois counties total over 2.5 million in population. Missouri counties comprise 76.51% of the total regional population and Illinois counties make up 23.49% of the region's population.

Overall, the region has grown steadily since the 1980s, after a loss in population between 1970 and 1980. On the contrary, the population of the City of St. Louis, the heart of the metropolitan region, has experienced a 14.8% decrease in the past nine years. Even more dramatic though, is the loss of the City of St. Louis population over the past 50 years at approximately 58%.

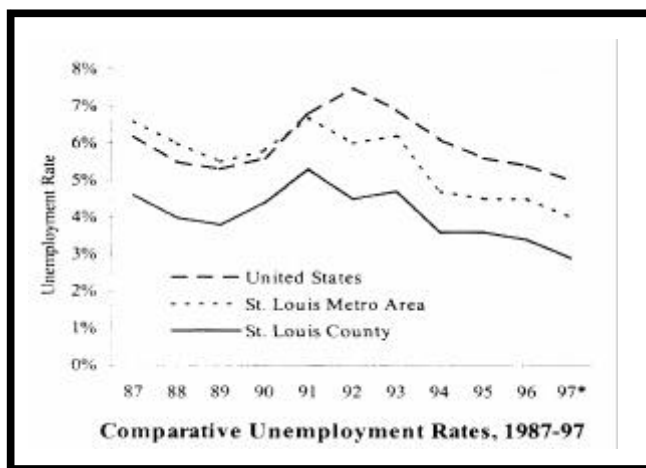
The population trend for the St. Louis region as a whole is a pattern of movement toward more rural areas. St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States with a dramatic increase in population in the past decade. However, as these outlying areas grow in population, they become more and more developed.



The racial composition of the region has remained consistent in the past decade with 81% of the population white, 17.6% African American, and 1.2% Asian. Similar to other metropolitan regions, people of color are disproportionately located in and near the central city. In the City of St. Louis, people of color are the fastest growing population, increasing 6.6% from 1990 to 1996, compared to a 2.2% increase for the region as a whole. African Americans comprise nearly half of the City of St. Louis's population, and more than one-fourth of the population of St. Clair County, IL.

### ! Employment

The economy of the St. Louis metropolitan region is one of the largest and most productive in the United States. Based upon composite measures of economic output, the region's economy ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 1992. In terms of employment, the number of jobs in the region have enjoyed considerable growth since the 1980s. From 1980 to 1990, jobs increased by 28%, and from 1990 to 1996, by 8.6%. In fact, joblessness is currently at a historic low for the region, as unemployment rates have steadily dropped since the early 1990s. The region's unemployment rate has been below the national rate for the past 8 years. As of February 1997, the unemployment rate was 4.3%, compared to the national rate of 5.3%.



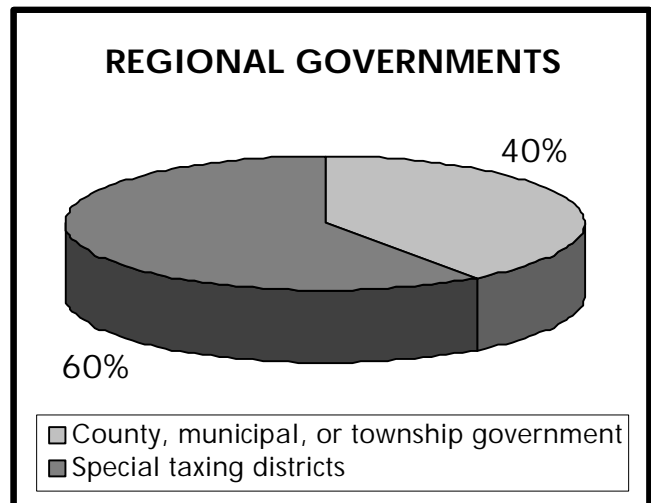
### ! Housing

With over a million housing units, the St. Louis region has a variety of high quality and affordable housing. The region's mix of housing types include single-family, apartments, and condominiums in the

City of St. Louis and the suburban counties, as well as small-town, rural housing in the outlying counties of Franklin, Jefferson, Clinton, Jersey, and Monroe. The region's housing market has consistently been one of the most affordable in the country. Nevertheless, the regional housing market is also one of the most racially segregated in the country. In a 1997 study by University of Michigan Professor Reynolds Farley, St. Louis was found to be the 11th most racially segregated city in the United States.

### ! Government

In 1996, the total number of local governments in the St. Louis region was 773. When compared to 35 other metropolitan areas throughout the nation, the St. Louis region ranks as the fifth highest number of local governments. When the number of governments is adjusted for geographic area, the region contains 12 units of government for every 100 square miles. If adjusted for population, the St. Louis region has 31 governmental units per every 100,000 people. Moreover, 60% of the region's governments are special taxing districts, performing specialized functions, such as education, fire protection, and ambulance service.



# Indicators of the Need for St. Louis County as a Regional Leader

Four principal means of information gathering were utilized in determining the critical issues which St. Louis County faces in the next several years: focus groups and a telephone survey of St. Louis County residents, one-day retreat of St. Louis County government officials, trend analysis conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning, and nine public forums throughout the County to solicit comments and perspectives from St. Louis County residents. Together, these methods identified four critical issues facing St. Louis County:

- ! The County's Role in the region
- ! Reinvestment in Older Areas
- ! Transportation
- ! Services to Unincorporated Areas

The following discussion summarizes key points regarding the need for focused attention on the County's role in the region.

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## Telephone Survey and Focus Groups

In December 1998, Attitude Research Company (ARC) conducted a series of focus groups on behalf of St. Louis County Department of Planning. Focus groups were comprised of residents of unincorporated and incorporated areas of St. Louis County. In February 1999, ARC conducted a telephone survey of 617 St. Louis County residents. Again, individuals from both incorporated and unincorporated areas of St. Louis County were interviewed. Key comments and findings from the ARC research reveal how County residents currently view the County's role in the region and how it could strengthen its position in this regard.

Many individuals in the focus groups expressed that the County could take a lead role in terms of regional economic development. The majority of focus group and telephone survey respondents were supportive of airport and MetroLink expansion as important economic development initiatives for the St. Louis region. The issue of sprawl was generally perceived as bad for the City of St. Louis as well as the County by focus group respondents. Even so, most telephone survey respondents did feel that St. Louis County is moving in the right direction.

Major issues facing St. Louis County as identified by

telephone survey respondents included: the lack of cooperation between St. Louis City and County, urban sprawl, government fragmentation, and too many cities in the County. Issues regarding race relations, storm water control and air quality were felt to be serious problems that the County could also address, but these issues were not identified as highly problematic as the others.

## Government Officials Retreat

In February 1999, elected officials of St. Louis County government, department directors, and key

### Telephone Survey Results: Major Issues in St. Louis County



- ' Urban sprawl
- ' Government fragmentation
- ' Lack of cooperation between the St. Louis City and St. Louis County
- ' Too many cities in the County
- ' Race relations
- ' Storm water control
- ' Air quality

staff met for a one-day retreat to identify key strategic planning issues. A major theme arising from the input of these government officials regarding the County's role in the region was that the County could play a leading role in the St. Louis region. Retreat participants identified several areas that the County could play a greater regional leadership role including, mass transit improvements, stronger regional planning, and the use of the County's resources to assist smaller communities with fewer resources in improving services and the physical environment.

***A major theme arising from the input of St. Louis County elected officials, department directors, and key staff was that the County could play a leading role in the St. Louis region.***

## Community Forums

Nine public meetings were held across St. Louis County to generate diverse input from County residents about what they believe are the most critical issues facing the County. Public input was also received through a telephone comment hotline and through an e-mail account established for this purpose. This public input process reached over 400 people with 11% identifying regional leadership as a critical issue facing St. Louis County. The issue of urban sprawl was identified as a critical issue by 8% of public engagement participants.

## Trend Analysis

Key trends identified by St. Louis County's Department of Planning that are consequential in considering the County's role in the region included: As the region's demographics change, the County will become increasingly racially diverse. The challenge for the County is to attract and retain middle-class African Americans as well as other people of color. This is particularly important in light of aging and deteriorating neighborhoods throughout the County.

The County is in a vicarious position regarding government financing. Tax base changes and County changes may make it difficult to finance many small governments. With increasing fragmentation, dissent and competition between government entities for greater tax bases result. Clearly, this is a trend that the County could work actively to reverse.

# The County's Involvement in the Region

Before we consider how St. Louis County can further enhance its leadership role in the region, it is necessary to examine how the County has exercised regional leadership up to the present time. From the information gathered during the input phase of the strategic planning process, it is evident that government officials and County residents see tremendous potential for the County to further develop and strengthen its role as a regional leader in three key areas: regional planning and growth management, diversity, and coordination between governmental entities. The following is a brief review of the County's recent involvements in each of these three areas.

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## Regional Planning and Growth Management

The issue of "urban sprawl" was continually identified through the information-gathering process as critical for St. Louis County to address. The telephone survey found that almost 2/3 of the 617 respondents want something done about "urban sprawl," and 8% of the 400 citizens who provided input through the public engagement process felt that "urban sprawl" was a critical issue facing the County. It was clear, however, that "sprawl" meant different things to different people. It was referenced as a "lack of open space," "lack of proactive planning," "unregulated growth," constant movement west, "lack of land use controls," and "growth at the expense of other areas." Regardless of how citizens define urban sprawl, it is clear that the issue of unmanaged growth and development is perceived by St. Louis County residents as increasingly unhealthy for our region.

According to the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, the St. Louis region is one of the top five most rapidly "sprawling" metropolitan areas in the country. The Peirce Report, a 1997 study of the St. Louis region by urban experts Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, reported that since 1950, St. Louis City has lost 58% of its population, while the "the region has subsidized a thinly spread pattern of suburban growth. While the population of the entire 12-county region grew just 35% from 1950 to 1990, the amount of developed land soared 355%" (Peirce Report, 1997, p. 14). Peirce and Johnson point out that the massive loss of population from the center

city, the growing loss of population from inner-ring St. Louis County suburbs, and the rapid growth and development continuing further and further away from the metropolitan core has severe consequences.

Currently, readily developable land site in St. Louis County is close to exhausted, yet the fiscal costs of "sprawl" are great. The infrastructure costs alone needed to support the continued growth and development westward are enormous. From a regional perspective, the growing isolation and deterioration of the City of St. Louis will ultimately have a tremendous impact on each and every other county in the St. Louis region while further fueling "urban sprawl."

St. Louis County's current efforts to address the issue of urban sprawl have been primarily in partnership with other regional agencies. For example, the most significant involvement in the past several years has

***Regardless of how citizens define urban sprawl, it is clear that the issue of unmanaged growth and development is perceived by St. Louis County residents as increasingly unhealthy for our region.***

been with East West Gateway coordinating Council's Initiative for a Metropolitan Community, a regional, intergovernmental initiative to address the issue of smart growth. The Page Avenue Extension, despite all of its controversy, was another area in which the County exercised its leadership in partnership with the Regional Commerce and Growth Association to address the issue of westward expansion and development.

Additional efforts of regional collaboration include the County's coordination with the Bi-State Development Agency, East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, and the Missouri Department of Transportation in the highly controversial yet critical efforts to expand MetroLink and the Lambert St. Louis International Airport. The County is also a partner with St. Louis 2004 Initiative for Sustainable Neighborhoods, in which the County communities of Lemay, Wellston, and Jennings have been targeted for revitalization efforts.

***From a regional perspective, the growing isolation and deterioration of the City of St. Louis will ultimately have a tremendous impact on each and every other county in the St. Louis region while further fueling "urban sprawl."***

## Diversity

The diversity of our region, as well as our nation, continues to change dramatically. According to 1990 census data, the St. Louis region has a population comprised of 81.3% white, 17.3% African American, .9% Asian and Pacific Islander, and .5% Hispanic. African Americans comprise nearly half of the population of the City of St. Louis and are more than one-fourth of the residents of St. Clair County. St. Louis County's African American

population is at 14 % and is primarily concentrated in the northern quadrant of the County.

According to the trend analysis undertaken by St. Louis County Department of Planning, the County is becoming increasingly diverse with an estimated increase from 14% in 1990 to 23% in 2020. Since 1996, white births have dropped significantly in St. Louis County while African American births peaked in 1993, declining only slightly since then. Currently, 26% of all births in St. Louis County are people of color.

Of those who responded to the telephone survey, 36.6% feel that race relations are a significant problem facing St. Louis County. Large numbers of respondents to the telephone survey (72.8%) felt that County government could make economic and job development a priority. Interestingly, nine in ten African American respondents felt that economic development, particularly with respect to workforce development and job placement, is critical for the County to address compared to seven out of ten white respondents. Clearly, issues of economic justice were of great concern to the majority of African-Americans represented.

In the public forums, race relations was an issue brought up numerous times as both a weakness and a threat that St. Louis County could address. Quality of life was a key theme that emerged in the public engagement sessions as well as at the government officials retreat. Attracting and retaining residents and businesses in the face of demographic and economic change coupled with maintaining aging buildings and infrastructure were identified as critical to assuring a high quality of life in St. Louis County.

Racial polarization is one of the core problems facing the St. Louis region. Based on 1990 census data, Reynolds Farley of the University of Michigan concluded that St. Louis is the 11th most segregated city in the United States. Furthermore, according to the 1995 study, "Discovering Common Ground: Creating the Spirit of Community," St. Louisans perceive the quality of race relations in the St. Louis metropolitan area to be on the decline, while more than 80% of all participants in this study said that good race relations are very important to a

community's quality of life.

Currently, St. Louis County is addressing issues of diversity and racial polarization largely through its involvement with other major community-led initiatives. The County has been a member of the CommUnity St. Louis Collaboration Council, a community-wide effort to dismantle racism spearheaded by the National Conference for Community and Justice, and is involved in the St. Louis 2004 region-wide effort to combat racism.

County Executive Buzz Westfall took a pro-active lead in combating racism in 1994, when he initiated a Unity Rally at the County Courthouse in response to a Ku Klux Klan rally. The Unity Rally was extremely successful, and led to the County's commitment to continuing with this initiative in the future. The County spearheaded the Unity Rally again in 1995 in collaboration with numerous community organizations and other local governmental entities. Since the last Unity Rally, however, the initiative has lost momentum. While the Unity Rally may not be the appropriate vehicle for the County to continue to address issues of racism in the region, it represented a pro-active effort on the part of the County to take a public stand against bias, bigotry, and hatred.

## Coordination Between Governmental Entities

One of the concerns continually noted by citizens in the public engagement portion of this strategic planning process was both local and regional governmental fragmentation, lack of coordination, and the separation between St. Louis City and St. Louis County. Interestingly enough, this issue also emerged as a critical one from the government officials retreat. The theme of fragmentation was noted as the top external weakness perceived by government officials, as they expressed concerns regarding the region's parochialism and the County as non-regional. This has long been a concern for residents in the St. Louis region, and has been examined in numerous studies over the decades. Most notably, Confluence St. Louis issued a task force report in 1987 calling for the re-entry of St.

Louis City into the County as a municipality. This recommendation was highly controversial, and was never implemented given its significant political and public roadblocks.

Citizens expressed their frustration with the fragmented nature of the County and municipal governments in the public engagement phase of the strategic planning process, as they continually stated they would like to see increased coordination, leadership, and vision. Citizens also expressed a desire for the County to take a lead role in developing partnerships between County government and municipalities as well as between municipalities.

### ! Intra-Government Fragmentation

St. Louis County government plays a dual role in terms of service delivery. It provides county-type services to the entire County (i.e., arterial roads, revenue collection, public health services, a jail, and others). It also provides municipal-type services to residents of unincorporated areas (i.e., planning, zoning, police protection, and public works). In addition, the County also makes several services available to municipalities on a contractual basis. Municipal governments vary in the services that they provide their residents. Some provide minimal services and may contract with other municipalities, the County or private contractors to meet their needs. As a result, it is often unclear to County residents who is responsible for delivering which services. This is further complicated by the fact that the County is comprised of 91 municipalities ranging in size as well as many unincorporated areas.

### ! Inter-Government Collaboration

In the St. Louis region, we are increasingly experiencing the impact of operating in a fragmented manner. Issues such as MetroLink expansion, "urban sprawl," and environmental health falter because of political divisiveness, parochial thinking, and lack of regional vision. The notion that "we are all in this together" is outweighed by a "not in my backyard" mentality. As a whole, the St. Louis region is not versed in intergovernmental collaboration. For example, there is a sense of "winning and losing" when a

corporate headquarters decides to locate in the City instead of the County or vice versa.

In the instances when the County has engaged in collaborative leadership efforts, the importance of operating from the perspective of addressing regional needs has paid off, as the following examples demonstrate:

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection and Disposal**

The St. Louis County's Department of Health has led the way, in conjunction with the St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste Management District, for the development of a regional solution to household hazardous waste collection and disposal. In 1996, the Department of Health contracted Confluence St. Louis to undertake a regional study of household hazardous waste collection. Today, successful steps are being taken to implement the recommendations from that study in order to develop a regional household hazardous waste collection and disposal facility. The Department of Health continues to push this effort forward in collaboration with the City of St. Louis, the Metropolitan Sewer District, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the EPA, and other county and municipal governments. The County's understanding of the need to address this issue from a regional perspective makes this initiative a win-win for the region and provides the propulsion to move the effort toward implementation. This effort has also recently resulted in the securing of state funding toward this end.

**Resurgence of the City of St. Louis**

St. Louis County government has been actively involved in several initiatives related to the resurgence of the City of St. Louis. The County played an integral role in the development of the Kiel Center and America's Center, as well as in the recruitment of the Rams and the building of the TWA Dome.

**Empowerment Zone**

In perhaps the most notable effort in recent years, St. Louis County, St. Louis City, the City of East St. Louis, and the City of Wellston came together to collaboratively apply for the federal Empowerment Zone grant. As a result of this collaborative

partnership, the region was awarded this designation of \$100 million over the next ten years. The Empowerment Zone designation will allow low-income and deteriorating areas in the St. Louis region the opportunity for extensive redevelopment and rejuvenation. Clearly, this regional collaboration was good for the region as a whole as well as each individual jurisdiction.

**Potential Growth for St. Louis County as a Regional Leader**

There are many examples where St. Louis County has demonstrated innovation, risk-taking, and collaborative leadership to address regional issues. Many of these are mentioned in the above sections, and there are many more to be sure. However, while it is clear that the County is involved in addressing the issues of regional planning and growth management, diversity, and coordination between governmental entities, there is extensive room for truly developing itself as a regional leader in each of these areas. The County has the political, economic, and social weight to be a premier exemplar of regional leadership in the St. Louis region. It is the biggest, most populated, and most economically developed county in the St. Louis region; its position in the region could not be better for leading our region successfully into the 21st century.

With issues of regional planning, growth management, diversity and intergovernmental coordination, the County currently tends to join initiatives that are spearheaded and led by community and civic organizations. The Initiative for Metropolitan Community, CommUnity St. Louis, and the 2004 Sustainable Neighborhoods initiative are all examples of this. While each of these efforts are critically important for the County to be involved in, they are not the direct result of the County's initiative.

# Best Practices from Around the Country: Regional Leadership Initiatives

William R. Dodge, author of Regional Excellence: Governing Together to Compete Globally and Flourish Locally, cites five key trends that make regional decision-making absolutely imperative. These include: the increasing number and instances of major crosscutting challenges facing community leaders and citizens today; the disengagement of citizens from government and public involvement; the lack of appropriate government structure to address regional challenges; the growing economic, racial and fiscal gaps from community to community; and the growing imperative of successfully competing in a global economy (Dodge, 1996, 11). Each of these trends are not only true of communities across the nation, but also of the St. Louis region.

As a result, effective public leadership today must be collaborative and engage the participation of private, non-profit and other public entities. The decision-making process must become a horizontal model of participation across sectors and political boundaries rather than a vertical, unilateral, top-down model.

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## Regional Planning and Growth Management Best Practices

### ! State of Maryland Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative

The Governor of Maryland initiated a government-led, public engagement process to collect the input of citizens, local governments, and key interest groups on the issue of smart growth. As a result of the input collected through this public engagement process, a series of broad-based, common goals were derived which allowed for a collective starting ground across entities for the development and implementation of a smart growth initiative. Because this process began with input from all key stakeholders, the buy-in from surrounding city and county governments was easier. These goals arrived at for Maryland's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative included:

- , Save the region's most valuable remaining natural resources before they are forever lost.
- , Support development in areas where the infrastructure is already in place or being planned by targeting state resources to those areas
- , Save taxpayers from the unnecessary cost of building the infrastructure required to support far-flung sprawl development.

The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation program has been very successful. Though this was a State-led initiative, the established goals and the process were set up in a balanced, win-win fashion for all groups involved, including the State, local municipalities, urban and rural interests, environmentalists, and businesses. Maryland also passed legislation in 1996 that withholds state financing of county developments such as new roads, sewers, or schools that are outside of State-designated smart growth areas.

### ! State Legislation in Tennessee

The State of Tennessee passed groundbreaking legislation in May 1998 that required each county in the state to establish a coordinating committee to develop its county growth plan. The growth plan must identify urban growth boundaries for each municipality within the county and identify planned growth areas and rural areas within each county. Each plan also must demonstrate that it is promoting "compact and contiguous high-density development into its planned growth areas--while protecting valuable agricultural, forest, recreation, [and] wildlife management areas" (Peirce, October 1998). Each county and city must then come together to determine how their planned growth patterns fit together and agree on joint plans. The coordinating committees were each given until January 2001 to submit their plans, and the plans

should account for anticipated growth for the next 20 years. The legislation also provides for a dispute resolution process to resolve conflicts between cities and counties over growth management plans.

### **! Organized Regional Councils and Coalitions**

According to the Planners Web, an online journal for planning commissioners, "the most effective strategy for combating sprawl involves cooperation among communities within a county or region." While this is a difficult strategy to implement, regions around the country are modeling regional cooperation. For example, the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities in Minnesota is a regional council that addresses land use planning and the provision of key government services. This council is comprised of one council member from each of 16 districts and one chairperson. All are appointed by the governor. Another example is the metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon, which created a regional governmental group in 1979 called Metro. Metro is primarily involved with land use and transportation planning. As a final example, in Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland's inter-ring suburbs organized themselves into a coalition to address the issue of sprawl.

### **Diversity Best Practices**

The National League of Cities believes that knowledge and education are critical for governments to effectively address these challenging issues. As such, they are putting all of their top leaders through an education process, an informal dialogue process, and a seminar on racism. The National League of Cities contends that these issues are critical for governments to address to ensure a healthy, equitable community; to decrease racial and income disparities; to address racial barriers and polarization that weaken and hurt our community; as well as to ensure continued economic growth and development of regions within the nation and the global economy.

The National League of Cities has published several reports on the issue of governance and diversity, and began the Diversity and Local Governance Project which provides workshops and seminars on

this issue for local communities. Based on much of their data collection from conversations and interactions with local communities and officials, several common themes emerged around this issue. These include:

- , Local officials need leadership skills that will enable them to bridge deep racial divides and effectively represent the hopes and values of a diverse community.
- , Local officials must take the initiative to stimulate and participate in open and honest dialogues about race and racism.
- , Local officials need to employ collaborative problem-solving strategies that include diverse constituents in the decision-making process of governance, so all have a stake in a common destiny.
- , Local officials must affirm the role of city hall in overcoming historic barriers and creating a diverse municipal workforce that reflects the priorities as well as the demographics of the community it serves (National League of Cities, Governing Diverse Communities, p. viii).

### **National Trends of Widening Disparities**

According to William R. Dodge, growing racial and socioeconomic disparities in regions across the country inhibit effective regional problem solving and decision making. Dodge points to the following national trends to demonstrate these widening disparities:

- ' Regional income disparities between central cities and suburbs have widened over the past two decades.
- ' Residential racial segregation continues across all income levels.
- ' White flight continues to be a dominant practice in regions.
- ' People of color are a growing part of the population and are more likely to live in poor communities.

## **! Community Relations Council in Columbus, Ohio**

In 1992, Columbus, Ohio addressed their increasingly diverse population by creating the Community Relations Commission "charged by law to provide leadership to educate citizens about cultural diversity; identify and resolve community tension; and eliminate racism and discrimination." The Commission is comprised of a diverse group of twenty-two members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the county council. The Commission holds a community-wide event, the Gathering for Understanding and Peace, to address issues of diversity. Members of the community discussed hate crimes, formed study circles to dialogue about racial matters, and advocated for programs to address multi-cultural education and dismantling racism.

Interestingly, this group also developed Unity Day in 1993 as a community response to a Ku Klux Klan rally which St. Louis County also did in 1994. The Columbus Unity Day continues today, but is now focused primarily on youth.

## **! Study Circles in Lima, Ohio**

In Lima, Ohio, the City of Lima partnered with local clergy and a local university to develop a race relations program in conjunction with the Study Circles Resource Center. Ultimately, this project involved over 1250 people in small dialogue groups, or study circles, to discuss racism at 48 community religious institutions. This program is now being expanded to the business community and neighborhood organizations, as well as being incorporated into the high school curriculum of the Lima public schools.

This effort developed out of the racial unrest following the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles. The mayor of Lima approached local clergy and the local university to see if they would partner in such an effort, and many positive outcomes have resulted, including communication network across racial lines; local cultural institutions pro-actively reaching out to engage people of color more actively in their programs; friendships have developed across racial and denominational lines; and a documentary on the experience was made and aired throughout the country. The Lima

approach to race relations has become a national model that over 30 communities have looked to for assistance and direction.

## **! Developing Accountability at the YWCA in St. Louis, Missouri**

One local example of an organization committed to addressing issues of racism both internally and externally is the YWCA. The CEO of the YWCA has taken it upon herself to ensure that her Board and staff are educated about the "many 'unseen' ways that racism impacts each of us, people of color and white people, on a day to day basis." Their "One Imperative Task Force" developed a training curriculum in which every YWCA staff person participates, as well as a self-assessment of all YWCA programs and policies to ensure that they are anti-biased and aligned with the organization's commitment to eliminate racism. Finally, the YWCA will issue an annual report card to detail strategies and opportunities for improvement.

## **Intergovernmental Collaboration Best Practices**

Peirce and Johnson are fond of using the term "citistate" to refer to a region "consisting of a historic central city surrounded by cities and towns that have a shared identification, function as a single zone for trade, commerce and communication, and are characterized by social, economic and environmental interdependence." According to them, city, state, and county boundaries become somewhat irrelevant in the citistate paradigm. For the citistate, or region, to survive collaboration is the most important method of operation. From a regional perspective, if one part of the metropolitan area is failing in whatever capacity, it will impact each individual area as well as the whole entity.

## **! Metropolitan Mayors Caucuses in Chicago, Illinois**

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley invited mayors and representatives from the 269 municipalities that comprise the six-county region to attend a Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Approximately 40 mayors attended each caucus session to dialogue

about common approaches to regional issues. These sessions are closed-door and media is excluded so that caucus attendees can truly address the issues rather than focus on political posturing. One regional issue that is now being addressed through this process is how the region can comply with the Clean Air Act, given the area's current "non-attainment" status. (Peirce December 1998).

### ! Information Technology

Partnerships between governments are becoming more and more imperative as public concerns and problems are not limited by political and geographic boundaries. However, such partnerships are still extremely difficult to navigate and make succeed. One area where intergovernmental partnerships are having success are through the use of information technology.

Harvard University has found that in such information technology partnerships, issues of technological compatibility are always a challenge. But the greater barriers to success were found to be much more basic: funding constraints; lack of trust and cultural conflicts between jurisdictions; resistance to collaboration; and lack of political empowerment. In other words, politics and turf. It is here that the issue of leadership becomes so critical. In order for governmental entities to partner and successfully work together, risk-taking, innovative thinking, and collaborative leadership are absolutely key.

### ! Tax Revenue Sharing in Baltimore, Maryland

The Greater Baltimore Committee, a governmental group that advocates a regional approach to problem solving, is working to develop an arrangement to local city and county governments to share tax revenue from new businesses that locate in the Greater Baltimore region. The intent of this initiative is to not only regionally distribute tax revenues but also to encourage regional cooperation in attracting and retaining corporations to their metropolitan area. Baltimore understands that attracting new businesses to locate in the region is to the benefit of the region as a whole and that competition between jurisdictions for such businesses is counterproductive. Instead of setting

up a win-lose scenario, the Greater Baltimore Committee is in working to achieve a regional win-win for the City of Baltimore and its surrounding counties. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 13, 1997).

### ! Tax Base Sharing in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

Minneapolis-St. Paul has the only regional tax base sharing program successfully operating in the United States. The Minnesota Fiscal Disparities program works to reduce inter-community disparities while fostering economic development for the region. This program serves seven counties comprised of over 190 municipalities and more than 2.5 million people. This program was enacted by Minnesota state government in 1971 and implemented in 1975. The State of Minnesota saw this as one of the best options for addressing disparities between communities. Since this program was established in 1971, it has distributed 40% of the increase in commercial and property tax base. To distribute the tax base, an index is calculated for each local government jurisdiction, based on population and assessed property value. Administration of this program is rotated among the participating county governments. (Dodge 1996, pp. 164-165)

### ! Developing Regional Constituency in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas

The Regional Unity Program in the Dallas-Fort Worth region is directed toward community leaders to develop a regional constituency across political lines as well as fiscal, economic and racial disparities in order to develop a consensus-based coalition to address regional problems. This program brings leaders together to build relationships and establish trust at regional cultural events, baseball games, dinners, etc. It develops a broader understanding in community leaders about the importance of regional unity to effectively address regional problems through strategy and solution development. It does this through a speakers bureau, bringing together graduates of local leadership programs and conducting workshops and seminars to address regional challenges. (Dodge 1996, pp. 215-216).

# Defining St. Louis County's Role in Regional Leadership

There are several potential strategies that St. Louis County could take to strengthen its role in the region. One potential option, of course, is to remain at the status quo. But it is presumed that the status quo is not acceptable. The following options are just that—options. They are not yet recommendations. They arise from identified problems and from approaches tried both within the St. Louis area and by other communities. Whatever strategies are taken, it is important that the political, economic, and social realities be taken into consideration. It is also important that strategies can be initiated and produce measurable outcomes in the next five years.

## Regional Planning and Growth Management

### ! **Option 1: Implement the Initiative For A Metropolitan Community Recommendations**

With respect to the issue of urban sprawl, the County has the capability to lead the region in the area of coordinated growth management. The East-West Gateway Coordinating Council's Initiative for a Metropolitan Community released in April 1999 is a document that has 16 recommendations for developing a regional growth agenda for the metropolitan area that were arrived at through a collaborative process involving government officials from throughout the St. Louis region. While this initiative was spearheaded by the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, it is incumbent upon the individual local governments to work together to implement these recommendations for growth management in the St. Louis region. As the largest and most central county in the region, St. Louis County is in an optimal position to build upon the East-West Gateway report and move it forward.

### ! **Option 2: Organize a Regional Coalition and Engage Citizens**

Addressing the recommendations asserted by the Initiative for a Metropolitan Community or developing other region-wide recommendations to tackle the issue of growth management could be done through the County Executive's initiative to form a collaborative regional council comprised of government officials, key interest group

representatives, and citizens to begin to further develop and implement the recommendations of the report. The County might want to begin this process by going out to citizens and key stakeholders in the St. Louis region to determine what are their primary concerns and suggestions regarding issues related to sprawl.

### ! **Option 3: Collaboratively Write and Lobby for State Legislation**

Using the models of the state legislation passed in Tennessee and Maryland, St. Louis County bring together legislative coalition consisting of municipal and county government representatives to develop legislation to introduce to the Missouri General Assembly. An ombudsman or dispute resolution facilitator should be on hand to help the group work toward consensus and address conflicts and difficulties.

### ! **Option 4: Facilitate Collaborative Leadership**

The most critical component of addressing the issue of growth management in the St. Louis region is to move away from the use of blame. The ability to successfully address such controversial and "turf-laden" issues such as growth management lies in developing a regional partnership and working from a collaborative, consensus-building approach. Clearly, this is a longer and more difficult road to take than retreating into parochial, isolated decision-making. But the bottom line is that the former will lead to constructive, long-term solutions, while the latter will lead to a collapsed, more fragmented, and even further dilapidated region. If

a collaborative regional council was developed to address this regional concern, a strong and tightly facilitated opportunity for dialogue might be an appropriate first step for the parties who come to the table.

**! Option 5: Build on Local Models of New Urbanism Communities**

In addressing planning from a regional perspective, the County has the ability to launch and oversee a collaborative regional council to address key issues using sustainability, regional problem-solving, and the concept of new urbanism at its core. New urbanism is a planning movement that promotes a stronger sense of community through more compact development, mixed land use (commercial and residential), a strong pedestrian orientation, active civic and community life, linkages between public transit and land use and higher housing densities. Many of the County's municipalities, such as Webster Groves, Kirkwood, Clayton, and Ferguson, model new urbanism concepts. These municipalities and other communities in the St. Louis region can be identified and brought together in an information-sharing and brainstorming session to begin thinking about these planning concepts on a more regional basis.

**Diversity**

The St. Louis region is highly segregated, with the majority of African Americans residing in the City of St. Louis, North St. Louis County, and parts of St. Clair County. Not surprisingly, these communities are some of the lowest-income parts of the region. So, how can the County take a regional leadership role to address the issue of racial disparity and race relations?

Peirce and Johnson noted in the Peirce Report on the St. Louis region that "blacks in the St. Louis area are much worse off than whites on such measures as living in poverty, unwed mothers, infant death rates, high school graduation, per-capita income." They go on to say that "race pervades every St. Louis regional issue. It feeds the sprawl and all the costs of sprawl as people run from inner-city minorities. It explains the disparities in school funding . . . . It

limits the geographic appeal of the new rail system because far-out suburbs don't want too easy a connection to the core."

**! Option 1: Conduct a Government Self-Assessment**

While the Lima and Columbus models have been effective for their communities, it is also very important for governments to assess their own workforce and "ways of doing business" to ensure that they are modeling an inclusive government and proactively working to fight institutional racism. It is important for public officials to understand the demographics that comprise their jurisdiction and the communities around them and how that diversity impacts policy decisions and practices.

- , County government can assess its internal demographics. Are those working on behalf of County residents truly representative of them?
- , County government can review its internal policies to ensure that they are bias-free.
- , County government can review its external policies to ensure that they are bias-free.
- , County government can examine all of its current initiatives and commissions to ensure that they are comprised of a demographically diverse group of people who are all equally involved in the decision-making process.

**! Option 2: Take a Stand**

The County can speak out publicly and more forcefully against racism and consider the following actions:

- , The County can ensure that it models respect for diversity by having a workforce that is representative of the population it serves and by working with the St. Louis Minority Business Council to develop a policy for increasing its business with local, minority-owned businesses.
- , The County could be the first governmental entity in the region to actively follow-through on *Covenant 2004*, a private industry covenant geared toward supporting minority business development. This Covenant was endorsed by the County in 1997.
- , The County Executive and elected officials can take a greater leadership role in the CommUnity St. Louis and the 2004 race

relations efforts by being a more vocal advocate and active participant in these initiatives.

**! Option 3: Collaborative Decision Making**

County officials can work harder to ensure that major decision-making is done collaboratively by involving a wide variety of citizens that represent their diverse constituencies. The County can effectively bring diverse groups of stakeholders together to work in partnership to address different regional issues, such as growth management, MetroLink, etc. Each of these issues has as much to do with race and racism as they do with establishing boundaries and expanding transportation services.

**Coordination Between Governmental Entities**

Some of the best practices outlined below may be too far-reaching for the St. Louis region at this time, but they do provide a sense of the innovation and region-wide implications of intergovernmental collaborations. With respect to St. Louis County, the County can adopt pieces of these models by beginning to think and plan in new and innovative ways. Following are some possible recommendations for the County to exert regional leadership with respect to intergovernmental collaboration.

**! Option 1: Be a Regional Advocate**

With the success of the Empowerment Zone application process as a leading example of the power of intergovernmental cooperation in the St. Louis region, the County should become a greater public advocate for and initiator of regional initiatives.

**! Option 2: Institute Quarterly Regional Government Caucuses**

Similar to the effort in the Chicago region to convene the mayors from the 269 municipalities in region, the County Executive can initiate such meetings between government officials from both county and municipal governments throughout the

region to address regional issues and develop regional strategies to address them.

**! Option 3: Explore Existing County Information Technology Capacities and Opportunities to Enhance Regional Problem-Solving**

County government can begin to explore in what ways it could become technologically networked with municipal governments, county governments and the State of Missouri. It could begin to explore options of information technology linkages in the areas of criminal justice, health and human services, and service delivery.

**! Option 4: Develop and Promote Regional Economic Development Initiative**

The County Economic Council can continue to expand its portfolio of regional economic development initiatives, institutionalize these into regional leadership models of collaboration, and develop a library of lessons-learned.

**! Option 5: Collaborate with the Regional Report Card Initiative to Develop Regional Benchmarks**

St. Louis County can take the lead in establishing an intergovernmental coalition to work with the United Way of Greater St. Louis on the Regional Report Card, using each indicator as a benchmark for establishing regional initiatives and regional improvement campaigns. This could also take the form of a regional public-private-nonprofit coalition.

**! Option 6: Partner with Regional Community Organizations**

St. Louis County can more actively partner with regional community organizations such as FOCUS St. Louis, East-West Gateway, St. Louis 2004, CommUnity St. Louis, the United Way of Greater St. Louis, etc. to develop regional strategies for addressing critical issues. In conjunction with these organizations, the County can develop citizen outreach and engagement processes; facilitate, issue-specific, consensus building workshops; implement conflict resolution strategies; develop a government officials regional leadership program;

and tackle regional issues systematically and collaboratively.

! **Option 7: Develop Greater Intra-County Collaboration**

Within St. Louis County itself, the County can form an intergovernmental coalition to meet quarterly with mayors and city managers from all municipalities invited to engage in a facilitated dialogue about County-wide issues. If the County does not model intergovernmental collaboration and partnering, it will have a hard time being a regional leader in this area. The fragmentation of the County needs to be addressed as much as the fragmentation of the region.

! **Option 8: Forge a Stronger City-County Partnership**

The County Executive could initiate quarterly, strategic planning sessions with the Mayor of the City of St. Louis. Because so many citizens expressed concern over the division between the City and the County, the elected leadership needs to pro-actively come together to work toward common ground on key regional issues. It would be of great service to regional planning efforts if these conversations occurred prior to the eruption of interest groups and parochial disagreements.

Conclusion

St. Louis County has many options in terms of exerting itself as a regional leader in general, and in particular regarding the issues outlined in this background paper. Clearly, the County will have to decide how prominent of a regional leader it wants to be by working to pro-actively implement all, some or none of the options for action outlined in this paper. The options presented here, however, are springboard ideas from which others might be generated. As the reader of this paper and a critical member of the task force, please feel free to embrace, challenge, revise, or restructure the options outlined here as we begin to strategically develop St. Louis County's role as a regional leader in the next five years.

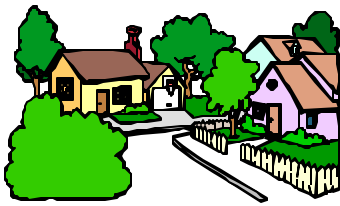
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# Strategic Issue: Reinvestment in Older Communities



## Trends Impacting Reinvestment in Older Communities

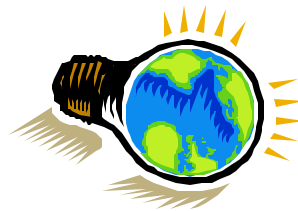
The largest component of existing housing stock in St. Louis County was constructed during the 1960s. In 1990, two-thirds of the County's housing units were at least twenty years old. The majority of the oldest housing stock is located adjacent to the City of St. Louis.

There is a growing reliance on tax incentives, rather than market forces, to encourage improvements in the housing and commercial building stock- even in affluent communities. Past development was principally market driven. Incentive-driven development is becoming more common in order to remain competitive with new development in surrounding counties.

Commercial buildings in St. Louis County were largely constructed between 1960 and 1990. Many

industrial buildings date back to the 1960s and 1970s, while office construction peaked during the 1980s. Many of these buildings are considered functionally obsolete and are not competitive with today's standards.

Redevelopment and infill development are substantially different from new development and will require changes in county and municipal procedures, codes, and regulations.



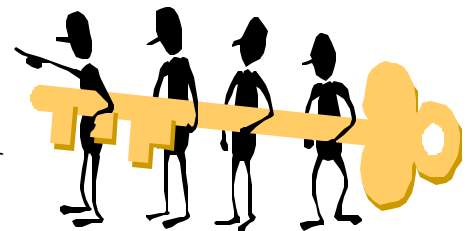
## Perspectives on Reinvestment in Older Communities

Government officials identified poverty and its growing influence in inner ring communities (municipal and unincorporated) as the top concern facing St. Louis County.

Top issues of public concern are the aging housing stock, mixed and confusing approaches to property code enforcement, and the need for stronger community development.

### Key Themes from Reinvestment in Older Communities

- ' As St. Louis County ages, preserving and stabilizing its older neighborhoods is vitally important.
- ' Maintenance of aging housing and commercial structures to prevent deterioration is a growing issue.
- ' Commercial and industrial areas which no longer meet contemporary standards need to be revitalized.
- ' Declining or blighted areas need redevelopment plans.
- ' Maintaining and replacing streets, sidewalks, sewer and water lines is important to improving



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# Introduction: The Case for Reinvestment in Older Communities

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s, America experienced a significant exodus from the urban center population to what are now inner-ring suburbs. This exodus was followed by additional migration as the population gained affluence and newer housing met modern consumer preferences. But inner-ring suburbs that flourished in the late 1960s and 1970s now are experiencing their urban neighbors' population losses and economic decline as migrations continue and new housing products continue to improve. This threat to the suburbs has been called "the second urban crisis (Miller)."

This trend is no less true in metropolitan St. Louis than elsewhere. While some of the more affluent suburbs like the cities of Webster Groves and Kirkwood thrived well before World War II, programs such as FHA mortgages and the expansion of the federal highway system made it easier for families to leave the central city. These trends created most of what are now the older, inner-ring suburbs of St. Louis County which now are facing similar urban aging pressures—older populations, harder to maintain homes and business structures, obsolete commercial centers, and so forth.

Helping to improve and strengthen these older suburban communities is as important for an entire region as it is to revitalize central city downtowns and urban neighborhoods. Yet most urban planning strategies and regulations still focus on greenfield development, in this case planning and developing in the newly growing suburbs. That leaves an increasingly critical gap for the pivotal and rapidly changing metropolitan "middles" (Seaver).

Community disinvestment and neighborhood decline are now not only problems associated with a big city. In fact, community deterioration, especially in suburbs that were once blue-collar and middle-class, has the ability to accelerate and intensify. This is because older, working-class suburban communities have less social, fiscal, and governmental infrastructure to slow these powerful trends (Orfield). Compared to big

cities, inner-ring suburbs lack the scale of the central city's business district, its elite neighborhood tax base (e.g., a number of high income neighborhoods still exist in the City of St. Louis), its social welfare and police infrastructure, and its network of organized political activity. Once trouble hits, therefore, the inner suburbs often decline far more rapidly.

Much experience has been gained in promoting reinvestment in inner cities and some of this experience is also valuable for the inner ring suburbs. But there are new conditions and new stresses, as pointed out above regarding the lack of a "big city" infrastructure. Moreover, the spread of urban decline into suburban areas demonstrates that the trend is of truly regional concern, not just isolated in a single, albeit large, central city.

These trends are on the minds of planners, public officials, and residents in St. Louis County. The background research conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning clearly indicates that many of St. Louis County's formerly vibrant inner-ring suburban communities are becoming subject to neighborhood decline and deterioration. The public officials retreat, telephone survey and opinion poll of County residents, and the various community forums also raised issues which point to the need to address neighborhood decline and disinvestment.

Thus, roles for St. Louis County emerge. As a large unit of government, it offers the opportunity to assist its own inner-ring suburban communities (both incorporated and unincorporated) with the infrastructure and resources too often lacking in small jurisdictions. Moreover, as the wealthiest and most populated county in the St. Louis metropolitan area, St. Louis County—perhaps in conjunction with the City of St. Louis—has the opportunity to identify and implement regional solutions to the spread of socioeconomic decline.

# Background Data and Trends

St. Louis County's population grew rapidly between 1940 and 1970, increasing from about 274,000 just before World War II to 951,000 in 1970. As shown on the following graph, this rate of growth for the County was similar to the rate of growth for the entire metropolitan area. Importantly, this rate of growth for the County and region before 1970 was also similar to the rate of national population growth. Since 1970, however, the U.S. population has continued to grow at about the same historic rate while metropolitan St. Louis and St. Louis County have relatively "leveled off."

Reaching just under one million residents in 1970, the County's present population is just over one million. Moreover, the metropolitan area reached just under 2.5 million in 1970 and is, today, only just above that mark. Thus, St. Louis County has not added residents in the past 30 years at anywhere near the rate it did in the prior three decades. Nor has the region. For that matter, nor have the five metropolitan counties of Metro East where the population has remained relatively stable at about 600,000.

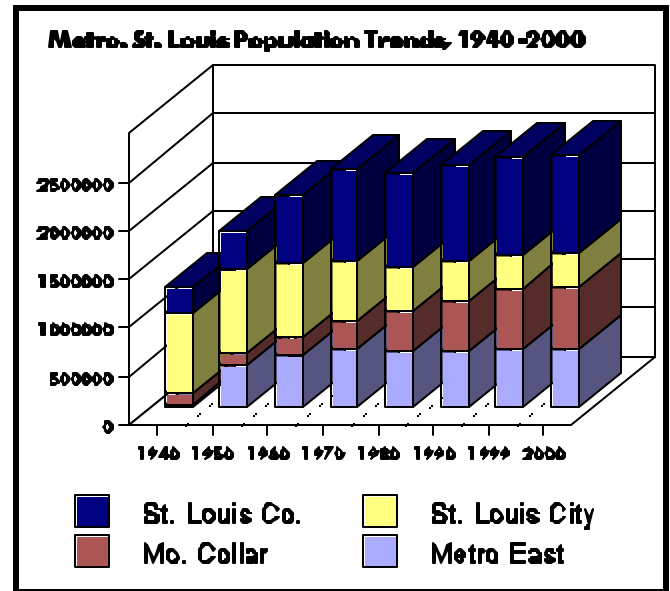
**Population of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area By County, 1940-2000**

Jurisdiction	Census 1940	Census 1950	Census 1960	Census 1970	Census 1980	Census 1990	Estimate 1999	Forecast 2000
St. Louis City	816,000	856,800	750,000	622,200	453,100	396,700	342,900	337,900
St. Louis Co.	274,200	406,300	703,500	951,400	973,900	993,500	1,010,200	1,011,500
St. Charles Co.	25,600	29,800	53,000	93,000	144,100	212,900	275,500	282,800
Jefferson Co.	32,000	38,000	66,400	105,200	146,200	171,400	195,700	198,300
Franklin Co.	33,900	36,000	44,600	55,100	71,200	80,600	91,700	93,600
Lincoln Co.	14,400	13,400	14,800	18,000	22,200	28,900	35,600	36,300
Warren Co.	7,700	7,700	8,800	9,700	14,900	19,500	24,300	25,000
Sullivan in Crawford Co.						1,000	1,300	1,300
<b>Metro West</b>	<b>1,203,800</b>	<b>1,388,000</b>	<b>1,641,100</b>	<b>1,854,600</b>	<b>1,825,600</b>	<b>1,904,500</b>	<b>1,977,200</b>	<b>1,986,700</b>
Clinton Co.	22,900	22,600	24,000	28,300	32,600	33,900	35,700	36,000
Jersey Co.	13,600	15,300	17,000	18,500	20,500	20,500	21,600	22,000
Madison Co.	149,300	182,300	224,700	250,900	247,700	249,200	257,800	259,100
Monroe Co.	12,800	13,300	15,500	18,800	20,100	22,400	26,200	26,800
St. Clair Co.	166,900	206,000	262,500	285,200	267,500	262,900	265,300	268,100
<b>Metro East</b>	<b>365,500</b>	<b>439,500</b>	<b>543,700</b>	<b>601,700</b>	<b>588,400</b>	<b>588,900</b>	<b>606,600</b>	<b>612,000</b>
Metro Area	1,569,300	1,827,500	2,184,800	2,456,300	2,414,000	2,493,400	2,583,800	2,598,700

Sources: Population Subcommittee of the Metropolitan Census Advisory Committee of the St. Louis Chapter, American Statistical Association; Development Strategies.

But there has been population growth in the Missouri “collar counties” of St. Charles, Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln, and Warren—most notably St. Charles County. This “growth” has come at the expense of other parts of the region, however. On a net basis, the collar county growth has come at the expense of the population in the City of St. Louis—although migration patterns also show that former St. Louis Countians move to the collar counties in large numbers while St. Louis County continues to attract from the City.

With numerical population stability in St. Louis County, however, has come a growing recognition that investment in many of the County’s communities (incorporated and unincorporated) has leveled off or declined. Ongoing population movement has resulted in differing settlement patterns throughout the County and many communities have been experiencing disinvestment or lack of reinvestment much as older urban areas of the U.S. (the City of St. Louis among them) have been experiencing since about World War II. Source: U.S. Census and the Population Subcommittee of the Metropolitan Census Advisory Committee of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Statistical Association.



# Indicators of the Need for Reinvestment in Older Communities

## Growth and Aging Trends in St. Louis County

Four principal means of information gathering were utilized in determining critical issues which St. Louis County faces in the next several years including; a trend analysis conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning; a telephone and focus group surveys of St. Louis County residents; a daylong retreat of senior St. Louis County government officials, including both elected and appointed leaders; and nine community forums throughout the County to solicit comment and perspectives from St. Louis County residents.

### FOUR CRITICAL ISSUES FACING ST. LOUIS COUNTY

- ' Reinvestment in older areas
- ' Traffic congestion
- ' Services to unincorporated areas
- ' The County's role in the region

What are the signs of disinvestment or potential problems associated with a failure to reinvest in St. Louis County's communities? Key indicators are pointed out in a report by the St. Louis County Department of Planning in preparation for the current strategic planning process. The following discussion summarizes key points regarding the need for focused attention on reinvestment and County government's potential role in the reinvestment process.

**! There is a large and aging generation of post WWII housing stock.** Such housing was state of the art at the time when families sought new housing for growing families in the suburbs. Many such homes are no longer as functional, including their size, for the 21st

century. A great many of these homes are still occupied by aging "parents." What is the market for these homes? Do they represent the next step in urban decline as future generations ignore the older homes in favor of more functional (and usually more valuable) housing further out?

**! There is an aging of the commercial property in the County.**

Employment followed residential growth to St. Louis County, allowing the County to now be the biggest employment center in the region and in the state. As jobs followed residents, places of employment were constructed which were suitable at the time. As developable land decreased and the population stabilized, less "new" space is being constructed and the older space is becoming less and less desirable. St. Charles County's residential growth is now attracting jobs, too. The impact of this pressure on St. Louis County's commercial infrastructure, tax base, and job base is indicative of a need for reinvestment.

**! There is a national, even global, trend toward "despatialization"** or a decreasing need to be near places of work or even places of shopping. This raises implications for infrastructure, transportation systems, and the relevance of existing commercial centers. If reinvestment is necessary, what are the new needs? Should there be conversions of land uses together with major infrastructure changes?

**! As the population of the County and the region ages over the next few decades (due to the baby boom cohort), the County faces the issue of attracting and retaining new workforce entrants.** A shrinking entry level cohort combined with an aging County population means St. Louis County will need new and competitive approaches to attract and retain

a diversity of household types.

- ! **There is a growing reliance on tax incentives, rather than market forces, to encourage improvements in the building stock** (housing and commercial), even in seemingly affluent communities. Past development was principally market driven as the population was growing. Maintaining the quality of life may require a more incentive driven economy both to compete with greenfield counties and to adjust development costs to reflect higher expenses associate with redevelopment and rehabilitation versus new development.
- ! **Government fragmentation continues to be a mixed blessing.** Are the many communities of St. Louis County a deterrence to comprehensive reinvestment or do they offer diversification of opportunity for different life styles? With suburban disinvestment or lack of investment come tax base changes which may make the services of many smaller governments (including nonmunicipal governments like school and fire protection districts) increasingly difficult to finance. This can lead to even greater internal dissent and competition for tax which can foster further decline in the quality of life. County government can suffer along with municipalities and other jurisdictions in terms of loss of tax base, loss of relevance, and a shifting of resources devoted to competition rather than growth.

## Telephone Survey Results

In February, 1999, 617 St. Louis County residents respondent to a telephone survey regarding the direction of planning for the County. Residents of unincorporated areas numbered 303 respondents while there were 314 respondents randomly telephoned within municipalities. Several of the findings relate to the issue of reinvestment in the County.

- ! **Residents generally feel the County and municipalities are moving in the**

**“right direction.”** An important follow up question is, of course, What is the right direction? The survey does not directly deal with that issue other than to point out a very high degree of apparent satisfaction with the quality of life in St. Louis County and its municipalities (about half the survey respondents were municipal residents, the other half from unincorporated areas). County residents seem to be happy with police, parks, storm water control, and many other aspects of government services.

But how did the County and its communities reach such high levels of satisfaction? Does the trend continue to rise or is it time to be looking at major reinvestments in County communities to assure longevity in the “right direction?”

- ! **This satisfaction is further reflected in the relatively low familiarity with County government facilities in Clayton.** People seem to be getting satisfactory government services closer to home—e.g., municipal governments, school districts, satellite County government offices. This raises important questions about the potential acceptance of County government involvement in local reinvestment initiatives. That is, what role can County government play which continues to reinforce the high level of satisfaction with “local” government?
- ! **County residents support expansion and diversification of transportation systems.** Respondents were very supportive of, for example, expansion of both Lambert Airport and MetroLink within St. Louis County. This certainly has reinvestment implications, although many of them are being addressed independently by the airport and Bi-State Development Agency.

- ! **Parks and recreation sites and services also demonstrated a strong preference for expansion and improvement**— even to the point of willingness on the part of survey respondents to support a related tax increase. Based on this support, is it possible that other reinvestment issues, if appropriately planned and presented, can receive similar backing?
  
- ! **Economic development within St. Louis County, however, received relatively low marks** from the survey, perhaps reflecting County residents' perceptions that growth is taking place in St. Charles County or that the City of St. Louis "gets all the attention." Economic development in a developed jurisdiction typically implies redevelopment. The lack of perception of an aggressive County-level economic development program might reflect citizen concerns that reinvestment initiatives are necessary but currently inadequate (or poorly visible).
  
- ! **These concerns may also be reflected in the survey's finding that almost two-thirds of the respondents want something done about "urban sprawl"** (a phrase which is never defined, however). Sprawl is, in effect, urban or suburban growth within which St. Louis County was, for a few decades, a national leader. But growth at the outer parts of an urban region typically leaves behind aging buildings and declining socioeconomic standards.

"Doing something about urban sprawl" in St. Louis County, therefore, may reflect a desire by County residents to see more resources expended on formerly highly vibrant areas in order to discourage outward migration. The various levels and numbers of governments in St. Louis County are not particularly bothersome to County residents. Survey respondents were, on the whole, unclear as to whether it is "better" to live in a municipality or in an unincorporated area. The level of satisfaction with County government as a local government provide, therefore, is not

significantly different than with municipalities. An increasing role for County government in supporting municipal services, therefore, seems appropriate since the County is already performing well as a local government, too.

- ! **Despite a trend toward more incentive based redevelopment, ignorance of incentive programs among County residents is high.** Is this because incentive based development is not yet widespread (although it captures the headlines more readily than market based growth)? Or is it because people don't want to really believe that St. Louis County and its municipalities need to be relying on incentives in order to upgrade buildings and facilities? Do people need to be informed better about the aging and changing conditions in the County in order to prepare them for greater use of incentives?

## RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

- ' **High Quality of Life.** A desire for St. Louis County to at least maintain its already high quality of life. To do so requires a continuous flow of reinvestment resources, just as the growth patterns of the past brought a continuous flow of investments in houses, roads, and commercial structures.
- ' **Support for Reinvestment Initiatives.** County residents appear willing to support reinvestment if properly planned, packaged, and managed. The survey further suggests that County government is highly regarded and should be an active participant in the County's

## County Government Officials

Senior elected and appointed officials of St. Louis County government met for a day of discussion and brainstorming in February 1999, to identify key strategic planning issues from their perspectives. With regard to reinvestment, a number of themes emerged.

! **Quality of life, expressed in a variety of ways, was very important.** Attracting and retaining residents and businesses in the face of demographic and economic change coupled with aging buildings and infrastructure requires requisite investments to assure that the quality of life in St. Louis County remains extraordinarily high.

! **Fragmentation of government and service providers showed up in various ways among the government officials.** Fragmentation can promote parochialism which, in turn, can shun community changes which affect the whole county if immediate and tangible benefits are not obvious to the local community. Growing pockets of poverty can feed this parochialism and fragmentation by encouraging government leaders to prevent poorer households from entering the community—when the better approach is likely to be cooperative efforts of all communities.

! **Outside threats include economic downturns for which St. Louis County must be prepared** despite the fact that the national economy has been strong for about the longest time in its history. History also teaches that the business cycles will go downward. There are also the threats of urban decline on the county's borders—although it doesn't take leaving the county to find ample examples of "inner city" decay. In short, appropriate reinvestment strategies in neighborhoods, business centers, and residents can prepare St. Louis County for the ups and downs of the business cycle and the uncertainties of adjacent jurisdictions.

! **Internal County government themes**

**focused on how well St. Louis County government is managed and on the resources it has to provide services.** It is generally recognized by county officials that county government is well run. This was reinforced by the telephone survey and by many of the community forums. At the same time, improvements can be made in terms of internal communications, setting and acting on priorities, and strengthening the funding base. This leads to opportunities in terms of better utilization of service providing technology, more efficient management (including some agency and department consolidations), and assuring that good employees are hired and retained. Thus, reinvestment in County government is as important as reinvestment in declining areas if the County is to have a more secure future. Resistance to change within County government, partisan politics, and loss of revenues can threaten such improvements, however.

## Community Forums

Nine community forums were held throughout St. Louis County in April 1999 to solicit discussion and ideas from County residents. Each forum included small group facilitation on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the County. This led to an identification of "critical issues" on which each evening's participants voted. This enabled the consultants to set apart priority issues from those which, while interesting, did not receive consensus acknowledgment. The themes leading to the establishment of Reinvestment in Older Communities included the following: Neighborhood Stabilization, Urban Sprawl, Economic Development, Housing, and Infrastructure. Combined, the themes shown above received the highest proportion of votes during the community forums among 17 critical issues. All of the above imply a certain amount of reinvestment in order to improve or maintain the quality of life in the communities of St. Louis County.

While St. Louis County is all but fully developed and, therefore, no longer in need of combating sprawl within its own borders, it can be a victim of the

negative impacts of continued suburban expansion in the face of almost stable population numbers. Under that circumstance, expansion necessarily means abandonment and underutilization of already developed areas, a phenomenon already apparent in parts of St. Louis County (e.g., Lemay, parts of the Normandy Municipal Council area, and even some of the older shopping centers along I270).

Growth at the suburban fringe can be discouraged by improvements to existing neighborhoods and commercial centers within St. Louis County. This would make more of the County more desirable to market forces which might otherwise seek "new" areas of development.

Economic Development which was poorly rated by respondents to the telephone survey. Clearly, there is a perception that more needs to be done to encourage economic reinvestment in St. Louis County. St. Louis County remains the biggest single concentration of jobs and businesses in the metropolitan area and the State of Missouri, yet there are ample examples of economic decline and obsolescence. The community recognizes this and seeks to have a strategic focus on attracting economic resources to formerly vibrant areas.

Housing is a theme which, interestingly, garnered relatively little support although it was consistently raised at the community forums. The issue is centered around the need for affordable alternatives within the County.

Infrastructure, likewise, was not a top of the mind theme among community forum participants but, when mentioned, captured a degree of interest which should be addressed in a reinvestment program. Certainly, reinvestment in neighborhoods or in economic development should naturally include infrastructure components.

## **PUBLIC INPUT THEMES**

### **Neighborhood Stabilization**

- ' Crime
- ' Community Development
- ' Decaying neighborhoods
- ' Neighborhood stabilization
- ' Safety
- ' Better law enforcement
- ' Declining land values
- ' Code enforcement
- ' Occupancy permits

### **Urban Sprawl**

- ' Unregulated growth, land use controls
- ' More and improved open space
- ' Constant movement west
- ' Pro-active planning
- ' Growth management
- ' Uneven allocation of resources
- ' Growth at the expense of other areas
- ' Loss of middle class
- ' Urban growth boundaries
- ' Costs of urban sprawl

### **Economic Development**

- ' Need for responsible economic development (tax base, job opportunities)
- ' Commercial & residential redevelopment
- ' Empty buildings
- ' Encouraging more business
- ' Not business friendly
- ' Lack of quality commercial (office parks over fast food)

### **Housing**

- ' Quality of housing in unincorporated St. Louis County and municipalities
- ' Affordable Housing
- ' Equal distribution of low income housing
- ' Problems with government/low income housing (Section 8 housing )

### **Infrastructure**

- ' Aging Infrastructure
- ' County Infrastructure- North County

# The County's Involvement in Reinvestment in Older Communities

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## Historical Background

Traditionally, St. Louis County has conducted planning studies at a variety of scales and for different purposes. The County has employed a General Plan since the early 1940s. The General Plan is required by the County's Charter. In 1985, the community area study process was initiated as an extension of the General Plan. The area studies are focused on a detailed analysis of an area of unincorporated County to identify guidelines for future decisions of the County Planning Commission and County Council related to land use and zoning.

The studies establish a range of possibilities for these decisions to provide some predictability to developers and residents alike. The entire process is conducted in an open format of meetings structured to gain awareness of local sentiments while disseminating information to promote a better understanding of County Government and land use regulations.

Since 1995, planning studies have taken a different course from previous area studies. They have relied on an ad hoc source of citizen involvement rather than a formal appointment of an Advisory Committee.

## Obstacles to Reinvestment

Over the last several years, the St. Louis County Department of Planning has engaged in a number of community planning initiatives, usually in conjunction with other County departments and agencies. Beginning with Project Lemay in the early 1990s, the Department of Planning has led planning efforts in the unincorporated communities of Affton, Lemay, and Spanish Lake, as well as being involved in CastlePoint. All of these planning efforts have focused on older areas in need of concentrated services and redevelopment.

With each of these community planning projects, there is an expectation a plan will be developed, and that the plan will be implemented. The willingness of residents, businesses, and other community stakeholders to participate in a planning process is limited without seeing tangible results for their efforts. Without the ability to implement, the county's credibility is diminished and the benefit to the community is negligible. To date, funding of these community initiatives has been problematic for a number of reasons:

The County's account-based budgeting does not provide for the flexibility needed in funding interdepartmental projects;

Project costs cannot always be anticipated a year or more in advance to coincide with the county's budget cycle. The nature of these projects is that needs and priorities cannot be identified until the community actually participates in the planning process.

The lack of access to project funds, capital funds, or matching dollars for grants makes it difficult to implement plan objectives and limits the county's ability to take advantage of leveraging state, federal, and private dollars.

A new approach to funding a community planning initiatives and their implementation is needed. This approach should take into account the interdepartmental nature of community planning efforts; the need for flexibility, particularly in light of unanticipated costs; and the need for implementation funds, such as capital improvement dollars.

# Best Practices From Around the Country: Reinvestment In Older Communities

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## Asset-Based Planning

Historically, efforts to revitalize communities have operated from a deficit perspective. That is, communities determined their deficiencies and needs in order to define the scale of the “problem.” Asset-based planning, on the other hand, starts with the things that currently work well within the community, or the assets that the community can build upon. Asset-based planning, as an approach to redevelopment, brings together the three disciplines of neighborhood planning, community organizing, and economic development, and attempts to mold them into a single methodology for community revitalization (Mourad).

The key to revitalization through asset-based planning is mobilizing whatever assets exist among residents and within the community as a whole. The end product of an asset-building effort is a healthy local economy characterized by the re-circulation of money, high rates of employment among residents, patronization of local businesses by neighborhood households, and an active, connected community.

## Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

Community-based development is a movement born of the poverty programs and policies of the 1960s. Now, community-based development is an industry of considerable strength that is quietly transforming lives and communities across America. Community-based development is a uniquely American force in the best traditions of social and economic institutions.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are non-profit organizations sharing several common characteristics. They are typically indigenous to the communities they serve, multi-disciplined, based on sound economic practices, and focused on outcomes

benefitting businesses and the community.

The 1999 census of CDCs by the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) shows that there was a 64% increase in the number of CDCs in America after 1994. To date, there are about 3,600 CDCs. Over the entire 30-year progress of CDCs, as measured by the NCCED, there have been the following aggregate accomplishments:

- ! 71 million square feet of commercial and industrial space developed
- ! \$1.9 billion in loans outstanding (at the end of 1997) to 59,000 small and micro-businesses (attesting to the smallness of these businesses is the average outstanding loan of only about \$32,000)
- ! 247,000 private sector jobs created
- ! 550,000 units of affordable housing built or renovated, nearly 40 % of which was completed in the four years prior to the 1999 census

The convergence of public policy shifts and the forces of an unprecedented growth economy in recent years has created conditions in which CDCs are positioned to be critical agents of economic change and important instruments for implementing public policy.

## Church-Based Support of CDCs and Related Efforts

Support of CDC growth by St. Louis County can help to leverage scarce County and municipal resources into much stronger community development programs. Many CDCs are church-based or church sponsored. Churches usually have vested interests in revitalizing their communities because it is difficult to move a church and congregations often have close ties to the community. Notable among church-based efforts have been St. Louis organizations: Churches United for Community Action, Congregations Allied for Community Improvement, and Churches

Committed to Community Concerns (National Housing Institute).

These church members of these organizations recognized that they had been combating the ill effects of “urban sprawl” for many years by ministering to increasing numbers of poor residents and dealing with the effects of increasing crime and drug usage. Uniting their resources to seek regional and state policy changes seemed a natural outgrowth. Their key goal, of course, is to reverse the disinvestment and abandonment devastating so many inner-city neighborhoods.

## Weed and Seed Programs

The U.S. Department of Justice sponsors Operation Weed and Seed. The first step of the program is to “weed” out violent crime, gang activity, drug use, and drug trafficking” in a targeted area. The follow-up step is to then “seed” the area with economic development. The Weed and Seed strategy recognizes the importance of linking and integrating federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts with federal, state, and local social services, and private sector and community efforts to maximize the impact of existing programs and resources (Council for Urban Economic Development).

All of the above are expected to be undertaken simultaneously as opposed to concentrating on crime reduction for a period of time and then shifting attention strictly to economic development. Tried primarily in inner city neighborhoods, there may be

### ELEMENTS OF WEED AND SEED

- Law enforcement
- Community policing
- Prevention, intervention, and treatment
- Neighborhood restoration and economic development

applications for troubled suburban communities as

well. A key example is the Northwest Austin neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois where an astounding three quarters of the residents are under age 25. Such an age cohort breeds violence and gang behavior and thwarts attempts to attract stable economic development. Through a Weed and Seed program coordinated by the South Shore Bank of Chicago, the Northwest Austin neighborhood has successfully mobilized a campaign for city infrastructure repairs and improvements focused around Austin High School. Given the demographics of the community, it was deemed most important to focus attention on the area around the high school because it is the principal concentration for activity for youths. Indications are that the program is bearing fruit. The high school is a “Safe Haven” center which offers constructive programs for children of all ages after school. Moreover, school attendance and test scores have improved.

The Weed and Seed program in Syracuse, New York, focuses on changing a negative perception of the target area—as task which has proven more difficult than battling the reality. While crime is down, economic development is still hindered because of long lingering perceptions of the neighborhood’s demise. Presently, local business people are promoting the area for reinvestment. But without the combined efforts of the Weed and Seed program, there would be nothing to promote.

St. Louis County communities, if carefully evaluated, can also benefit from such a program. It will be important, however, to selected communities which have serious crime problems. This is important both so that justice and police resources have a large leveraging impact and also so that deteriorated neighborhoods which are not subject to high crime are not mistakenly perceived as such.

## Pre-Measuring Key Market and Economic Characteristics

Most urban neighborhoods which have experienced major decreases in economic and social viability are also under served by key retail and related commercial services. A number of researchers have

found, however, that these neighborhoods have substantial buying power, despite low per capita incomes, due to their relatively high densities, a very high propensity to consume, and an abundance of income support programs, such as social security, food stamps, and welfare (Council for Urban Economic Development).

An approach to identifying such communities in St. Louis County would involve County government officials in identifying under-served communities based on distance traveled for convenience shopping, for instance, compared to the ability to support/pay for convenience goods and services. Promoting identified communities as good opportunities for developers and retailers could help to stem the tide of further decline which is often fed by a lack of services such that potential new residents are discouraged from moving in.

## Smart Growth Efforts

A frequent lament among central cities, and increasingly among older suburbs, is that cheaper land, lower taxes, and government subsidized services in newly developing suburbs and outlying areas lure middle class families and businesses away from urban core and older suburban areas. The premise of the argument focuses typically on the federal and state subsidies for highway development around existing developed areas. Newly constructed highways, in turn, allow people to move out of developed areas and into new homes which have the advantages of low maintenance and, many times, modern functionality. Moreover, federal and state income tax deductions for property taxes and mortgage interest payments encourage the purchase of ever more expensive homes in order to maximize the tax benefits. This discourages investment in existing homes because their values are typically lower. Financially, it behooves a home buyer to "move up" in price and quality due to the income tax benefits.

Currently, Smart Growth movements across the country are underway to combat the effects of subsidized out migrations, although the agendas can sometimes "border on the radical (Garland)." The movements are increasingly made up of coalitions of

central city and inner suburban officials backed by downtown business executives, environmentalists, church leaders, and farmers.

A key objective of Smart Growth efforts is to cause wealthy enclaves to place property tax revenues in regional pools that would be used, among other things, to redevelop abandoned properties. There would also be an end to policies such as infrastructure subsidies that fuel urban sprawl. Smart Growth policies often also include efforts to define urban growth limits.

If ex-urban growth is curbed, according to the Smart Growth argument, middle class families and businesses will remain in the inner core. Regional transit systems and affordable housing, meanwhile, would more readily bring poorer city residents to jobs and homes in the suburbs, reducing the concentration of poverty in inner cities.

As a result of such pressures, the State of Oregon enforces urban growth boundaries. The Minneapolis-St. Paul area in the State of Minnesota instituted a tax base sharing system many years ago to pool taxes from new development throughout the region. And corporations in Pittsburgh are urging a metropolitan-wide sales tax to finance new riverfront projects which will encourage more downtown economic development. The St. Louis region is replete with similar programs already in place. These include the several inter-jurisdictional, regional taxing programs to support, for instance, the St. Louis Community College, the Zoo-Museum District, the Bi-State Development Agency, and the Metropolitan Sewer District. But more could possibly be done by St. Louis County in greater coalition with other urban and suburban interests in the metropolitan area.

The State of Maryland passed its own Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Action in 1997 with the following key provisions which are aimed at promoting existing developed areas (Brookings Institute):

- ! Establishes "priority funding areas" which tie fiscal accountability to responsible development and planning in targeted areas;
- ! Facilitates the clean up of brownfields to encourage redevelopment;

- ! Limits adverse impacts of sprawl on agricultural lands;
- ! Encourages targeted job creation and economic development with job tax credits in targeted areas; and
- ! Promotes short and efficient commutes to work by creating the Live Near Your Work Program providing a minimum \$3,000 grant to families that purchase homes in targeted neighborhoods near their places of work.

## Revised Building Codes for Renovation of Existing Buildings

New Jersey has a new set of building codes devoted solely to the renovation of buildings, an initiative which suggests possibilities for St. Louis County as well. Renovation accounts for half of New Jersey's construction industry, but prior building codes required that a renovation costing more than half of a building's replacement value meant the entire building had to be brought up to the code requirements for new buildings—a costly and discouraging endeavor.

The new standards were developed over two years involving state officials and a thirty member committee coordinated by Rutgers University, a state university. The regulations divide rehabilitation work into four categories: repair, renovation, alteration, and reconstruction. Each category carries its own code requirements. The new codes were developed for two reasons:

- ! The potential market for rehabilitation projects includes 500,000 commercial buildings in New Jersey and 2.3 million houses.
- ! The state wants to encourage redevelopment of older areas of the state rather than promote urban sprawl.

## University Students as Affordable Consultants to Neighborhood Businesses

Over the years, a number of universities have taken an institutional approach to combat the decline in communities at their gates by using students to provide consulting services for economic development organizations and businesses. A key organization in this respect is Students for Responsible Business (SRB) founded in 1993 by business students interested in supporting socially responsible business practices. SRB members now come from 75 colleges and universities across the country. The organization sponsors a range of activities including conferences, career services, and paid internships. The internships are typically with both nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Council on Urban Economic Development).

Every year, the SRB markets its services through the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) with a goal of identifying a critical mass of students, organizations, and sponsors in any one city or area to make the program work. Interns are paid with contributions from local sponsors. Examples suggest the potential outcomes if St. Louis County were to become involved in SRB or create a similar, local program.

Examples of successful SRB efforts indicate how such a program can encourage existing businesses not only to stay in business but to stay in their local community. Three Harvard students provided a detailed cost analysis to a waste disposal and recycling company in Boston. The students evaluated company books to identify cost effective operations and to suggest future pursuits. A second team of Harvard students helped a restaurant owner to better track revenue and expenses. The students observed operations and then initiated improvements. They standardized meal portions, wrote job descriptions, produced a training video, and helped purchase new software. At Loyola College in Baltimore, students prepared a marketing plan for a transportation engineering firm.

## Expanding Housing Development and Housing Choices

The City of Richfield, Minnesota, an inner-ring suburban community in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, has used a variety of creative approaches to expand and diversify housing choices. The bulk of Richfield's housing was constructed just after WWII. Population peaked in the 1970s but has been declining ever since (Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association). In the early 1990s, Richfield realized it needed to provide more modern housing choices and replace lost and obsolete housing if it was to remain a vital city. Fifty years after WWII, families wanted larger, contemporary homes and other kinds of choices like condominiums and townhouses.

The City thus developed the "Richfield Rediscovered" Program. "Richfield Rediscovered" consists of new construction and remodeling components:

- ! The new construction component buys substandard homes from willing sellers, demolishes the homes, and sells the lots to builders who have already lined up buyers for newly constructed homes, typically with considerably higher values than the previous structures.
- ! The remodeling component offers homeowners the technical assistance of remodeling and design advisors, an annual remodeling fair, and one stop financing through local lenders. There is also a no interest loan available to individuals who remodel their homes with projects exceeding \$30,000.

The "Richfield Rediscovered" Program required not only money and political backing, but also changes to the zoning and subdivision regulations. Most of the new and renovated homes are bigger than their predecessors. In fact, many of the original houses had one story and the most efficient way to add living space is to remodel by adding a second story. The City of Richfield Planning Commission also reduced front setback requirements to allow homeowners to add front porches and additional living space.

As of early 1998, the "Richfield Rediscovered" program had resulted in the construction of 70 new

homes and remodeling of 30 homes. The average home value rose 29%, from \$82,600 in 1990 to \$106,400 in 1997.

Given the post-World War II character of many of the inner-ring St. Louis County homes, a similar program might be initiated. As older residents move out, the County and/or cooperating municipalities could purchase groups of homes and attract homebuilders to construct modern housing. Likewise, loan programs and other efforts aimed at improving the existing housing stock can be initiated more aggressively.

# Defining St. Louis County's Role in Reinvestment in Older Communities

While many communities in St. Louis County face the challenges of decline or socioeconomic change, not all of them necessarily need or want St. Louis County involvement. Some may want only very limited involvement, such as assuring that appropriate street maintenance, public safety, and public health issues are addressed in the "distressed" communities. Moreover, St. Louis County government may not want to direct its resources to suburban municipalities which should otherwise be able to manage reinvestment issues themselves—except inasmuch as certain ongoing County level programs are maintained.

But others may want or need deeper involvement by the County in order to assure that there are sufficient resources. And St. Louis County may want to intervene in order to prevent unnecessary spread of disinvestment problems and socioeconomic disarray.

How does the County determine where it should intervene? Some performance standards would be useful. Such standards would help the County determine the degree of decline which has taken place or could take place without intervention. They would also enable the County to estimate how much of its resources could and should be devoted to certain communities and which types of programs might be most appropriate.

Most existing standards in use in the United States involve various measures of poverty, crime, and economic obsolescence. Some of these measures are statistically objective (e.g., census-measured population decline or personal income changes) while others have a degree of subjectivity (e.g., determinations of blight for eligibility for use of certain redevelopment tools like tax abatement or tax increment financing).

## TYPES OF FUNDING NEEDED FOR REINVESTMENT PROJECTS

- ' **Professional Services:** Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Market Studies, and Survey Research.
- ' **Project Implementation:** a) Small improvements, under \$5,000 Identification signs, banners, street furniture, community gardens, cleanups, newsletters. b) Major improvements Sidewalks, street repairs, street lights, fountains, property acquisition.
- ' **Matching Funds:** Matching funds are needed to leverage grant monies which

## Legislative Reinvestment Tools

### ! **The Neighborhood Preservation & Rebuilding Communities Act**

As part of St. Louis County's 1998 legislative agenda, a proposal was offered to give tax breaks to homeowners in older neighborhoods who repair or renovate their homes. The bill was originally drafted to apply only to St. Louis County. The bill provided for a 25% state tax credit for the rehabilitation of any single family, owner occupied home that are more than forty years old and are located within a census block group in which the median household income is equal to or below the County median income. It was passed by the Missouri Legislature in 1999.

### ! **Community Improvement District**

A community improvement district (CID) is a special benefit district that allows groups of property owners to assess and tax themselves for community

improvement and services within their district. District projects may include public capital improvements, certain private capital improvements, and special services.

The CID legislation was created by the Missouri Legislature in 1998. Management of a CID is under the direction of a district board which, depending on the petition, may be appointed by the St. Louis County Executive with the consent of the County Council or elected by qualified voters of the district. Community improvement districts are independent political subdivisions.

A valid petition must be submitted to the governing body (St. Louis County) requesting establishment of the district. The petition is valid if it specifies the size, area, and duration of the district, the maximum rate of taxes which may be imposed, and the method and maximum rate of assessment. In order to have a valid petition, it must be signed by property owners collectively owning more than 50% of the assessed value of the real property within the boundaries of the proposed district and property owners representing 50% per capita of all owners of real property within the boundaries of the proposed district. After a public hearing, the CID is either approved or denied by the governing body.

The petition creating the district will also outline the maximum rates of real property taxes that may be submitted to qualified voters for approval, the maximum rates of special assessments and respective methods of assessments, any limitations on the revenue generation of the district, and limitations of the borrowing capacity of the district. Prior to levying taxes, an election must be held through a mailin ballot. A majority vote is required. The levy cannot exceed the rate stated on the petition without a vote of property owners. Taxes are collected and redistributed in the same manner as real property taxes.

### **! Redevelopment Overlay District Zoning**

The existing zoning ordinance for St. Louis County was written primarily for greenfield development. In other words, undisturbed areas of the County where development did not currently exist. As the County reaches full development, redevelopment of existing

sites becomes increasingly complex as the zoning ordinance does not address these situations. Property owners face constraints when trying to make changes to their commercial properties in order to remain viable entities and are unable to meet all current Zoning Ordinance requirements such as parking.

Special provisions in the Zoning Ordinance are needed to accommodate renovations and changes to existing developments, as well as redevelopments and new developments in older inner-suburban areas. The Department of Planning is currently drafting a new redevelopment overlay district to address the unique problems and conditions found in older commercial areas.

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# Strategic Issue: Transportation



## Trends Impacting Transportation

There are 761,954 passenger cars registered in St. Louis County - more than one car for every

adult County resident.

Over 84% of County commuters drive alone to work. This does not account for the many residents of other counties who work in St. Louis County. Nationwide, 73% of workers drive to work alone.

Congestion on interstate highways is increasing. For example, daily traffic on Interstate 64 at Mason Road has grown from 92,520 in 1991 to 134,584 in 1997, an increase of 50%.

St. Louis County is served by sixty-two Bi-State Development Agency bus routes. MetroLink, the St. Louis metropolitan area's light rail system, presently carries over 40,000 riders each weekday. Design work is in progress to extend MetroLink to Clayton and

Shrewsbury, which will increase ridership by an estimated 23,000 boardings per day.

Lambert-St. Louis Airport is the eighth busiest airport in North America, with over 1,400 arrivals and departures each day. The FAA has approved a major expansion of Lambert, including an additional runway and new terminal. Spirit of St. Louis Airport is home to over 500 aircrafts, including 100 corporate jets.

The greater St. Louis vicinity has been defined as a "non-attainment area" for ozone.

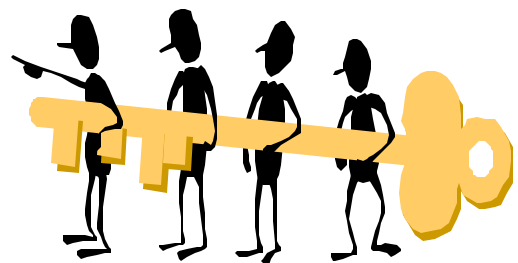


## Perspectives on Transportation

Traffic congestion was one of the top ten concerns identified by County officials. Nearly 60% of the residents surveyed in the telephone opinion poll cited "inadequate highway system for morning and evening commutes" as a serious problem.

## Key Themes from Transportation

- ' Growing traffic congestion and the increasing complexity of travel patterns in St. Louis County suggest that there should be more transportation alternatives to automobile travel, such as additional bus and light rail routes, bicycle paths and sidewalks.
- ' The capacity of the roadway infrastructure may be insufficient to accommodate the ever changing demands of a highly mobile population.
- ' As more employment centers have arisen in St. Louis County, there is a growing need for creative solutions to the problems of cross-county commuting during peak hours of travel. Air quality is negatively affected by slow moving vehicles on congested roadways.
- ' Funding and maintaining the large, aging, and complex system of roads and other transportation



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# Introduction

The St. Louis County Strategic Plan 2000-2004 will serve as the County's strategic road map for the next five years. This planning process will update the past strategic plan, as well as function as a framework for decision-making and specific action steps well past the next five years.

This background paper is meant to help facilitate a discussion about the topic of transportation. Transportation is one of four critical issues that were identified through the strategic planning process as the top issues on which the County will concentrate during the next several years. The other critical issues, each of which have their own task force, include: Reinvesting in Older Areas, the County's Role in the St. Louis Region, and Services to Unincorporated County.

## Key Transportation Themes

- ' Mobility--the ease with which individuals move about
- ' Accessibility and land use
- ' Mass transit
- ' Multi-modal facilities (bicycle facilities, sidewalks, bus and light rail)
- ' Safety and Congestion
- ' Infrastructure Capacity and maintenance

The list is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, the six key themes were established through the strategic planning process. From these themes and this report will come specific goals and objectives for the County's strategic plan. Each goal and objective will be tied to the appropriate County department,

departmental budgets, work time and staff.

The background paper is divided into five sections.  
**! Section 1: Background Data and Trends** provides a background data and a summary of the trends in transportation.

**! Section 2: Indicators of the Need For Transportation** is a summary of the feedback received from St. Louis County residents, County government employees, elected officials and department directors, businesses, and other key stakeholders.

**! Section 3: The County's Involvement in Transportation** provides an overview of St. Louis County's role and other organizations that deal with transportation issues within St. Louis County and the St. Louis region.

**! Section 4: Best Practices From Around The Country** provides examples of best practices around the country.

**! Section 5: Defining St. Louis County's Role in Transportation** outlines possible ways in which St. Louis County could be strategic in addressing transportation issues.

# Background Data and Trends

The issue of transportation is truly a regional issue as roadways and transportation infrastructure cross all boundaries. The St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic is just one of the many entities that deal with transportation related issues on a day to day basis. St. Louis County's transportation network is served by a multitude of local governments and agencies. Its more than 4,800 miles of roads include interstate and state highways, county arterial roads, and local roads.

As the largest county in the region in terms of population, jobs, and travel demand, St. Louis County has an important role in making sure that residents of St. Louis County and the region can move about freely, whether it be on a County arterial road, a state highway or a local road. Citizens of St. Louis County cannot always distinguish if they are on a County arterial road or a state road, or if a park-and-ride lot is under the County's jurisdiction or another. What residents are aware of are the frequent delays caused by traffic congestion and the limited availability of mass transit.

Through the strategic planning process, the different input sources identified six major themes within transportation. For the purpose of the strategic plan, the plan will focus on the following key themes:

- ! **Mobility**
- ! **Accessibility**
- ! **Mass transit**
- ! **Multi-modal facilities**
- ! **Safety and congestion**
- ! **Infrastructure capacity and maintenance**

## Mobility

Mobility refers to the ease with which individuals move about. When people complain about traffic congestion or that they do not have access to mass transit, they are really unhappy with their lack of mobility. Various data sources, such as the

availability of transportation services, automobile ownership rates, accident reports, and the ratio of traffic volume to capacity on streets, allow us to evaluate the quality of mobility within St. Louis County.

A 1997 Mobility Plan for St. Louis County assessed existing and future mobility conditions. The report identified ten residential areas and thirteen business activity centers representing a variety of demographic groups and locations. All ten residential areas were in St. Louis County. Of the thirteen business activity centers, nine were in the County and the remaining four (Washington University Campus, Washington University Medical Center and Forest Park, Downtown St. Louis and St. Louis University) were in the City of St. Louis. These areas were used to calculate different mobility indicators. The following is a summary of the report's findings:

### ! Highway System

- , Topography has played a key role in shaping the major road system. In particular, this limits options for cross-county travel and places a substantial emphasis on the role of I-270 and, to some extent, I-170.
- , Over capacity conditions are widespread throughout the system. The poorest conditions occur in the freeway corridors, including the major arterial streets that access freeway interchanges and operate in parallel.
- , Peak-hour traffic conditions indicate the need for road widening in many areas west of I-170. There is an increasing number of segments with daily traffic volumes in excess of 40,000 vehicles (i.e., need six-lane roads).
- , The County highway system (arterial and county road elements) extends throughout St. Louis County. Because of topography and the multiplicity of jurisdictions, the configuration of the system is complicated. There are many discontinuities and gaps. In some areas, there appears to be duplication in the system.

- , By the year 2015, the share of work trips from other counties into St. Louis County will increase from the current share of 27% to 32%.
- , While St. Louis County will still be the biggest trip generator by a large margin, it is estimated that, in the future, the largest increase in intercounty commuting will come from St. Charles County. Linkages between St. Louis County and St. Louis City will stay about the same in volume.

- , Some thirty organizations and municipalities provide some type of paratransit service in the St. Louis County area. Among the larger providers of service are Care Cab Transportation Services and OATS, Inc. The characteristics of these service providers vary greatly. Based on national experience relative to trip demand based on population, there is evidence that St. Louis is underserved by paratransit services.

## ! Transit System

- , Transit plays a relatively small role in the number of daily trips in St. Louis County. Daily trip-making is over 3.6 million person trips, whereas the Bi-State Transit system is used for only 100,000 trips.
- , The St. Louis County fixed-route/fixed-schedule transit system still reflects the historical configuration in which the St. Louis central business district is the dominant destination. Travel demands have changed substantially to the point where this transit service configuration is not effective for many St. Louis County trips.
- , The Call-A-Ride system of Bi-State is currently over-capacity during some hours. The social service agencies appear to be under-serving regional demand by 10% or more.
- , Transit service is most accessible along the eastern edge of the County because of the proximity to the stronger network of routes in the City of St. Louis. However, areas to the west have significantly lower accessibility or coverage.
- , Many employees have spread-out work or personal trip schedules which do not coincide with fixed-route/fixed-scheduled transit schedules.
- , In the future, continued growth outside of St. Louis County will change the trip lengths and the directions of the trips.
- , Over the past few years, the needs of three new markets have grown. These include: 1) workers need for access to jobs in St. Louis County, 2) mobility-impaired individuals' need for specialized paratransit, and 3) the general public's need for flexible services in lower-density areas.

Traffic congestion and safety, the availability of mass transit, and the availability of transportation for elderly and the disabled are all issues related to mobility. Again, these issues cross municipal boundaries and, in cases relating to public transportation, fall under the responsibility of Bi-State. Many private and not-for-profit operators also provide transportation services to specific clients. Examples of programs designed to increase mobility are provided in the next section.

## Accessibility

Accessibility is directly related to land use. It is defined by transportation planners as "the connection by which certain locations can be reached from all other locations, as measured in time, distance, and market area." The issue of accessibility is an example of how land use policies are directly related to and affect transportation.

In St. Louis County, like many parts of the country, development patterns of the past few decades have created communities that are increasingly auto-dominated. Land uses are segregated, trip distances are greater; roadways are wider and faster. The direct result is less accessibility for non-motorized users. If an elderly resident is lucky enough to live near a grocery store, can she/he safely and comfortably walk across the street to get there? Can children ride their bikes to school? Can MetroLink riders walk on continuous sidewalk systems or ride on bicycle facilities that lead to each station? These and other non-motorized accessibility issues need to be addressed as an integral part of transportation design, for it is most often the decisions made to accommodate motorized traffic that limit

access for other modes of transportation.

MetroLink station westward to Clayton and south to Shrewsbury.

## Mass Transit

Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State) operates the regional transit system (St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Madison County and St. Clair<sup>1</sup>) which consist of 595 buses, 31 light rail vehicles and 64 Call-A-Ride paratransit vans. The bus system is designed and operated by Bi-State, while the MetroLink System is planned by East-West Gateway Coordinating Council but constructed and operated by Bi-State.

### ! Bus System

St. Louis County is served by 39 local and 23 express bus routes. The overall regional system has a total average weekday ridership of 110,000 to 115,000 people over 77 local routes and 36 express routes.

### ! MetroLink

Of the 44,000 average weekday riders on MetroLink, 40% are St. Louis County residents. Because of the location of MetroLink, many County residents board at stations within St. Louis City. According to Bi-State ridership counts, the North Hanley Station, the most popular St. Louis County station, accounts for a total of 7% of all MetroLink boardings. The table to the right lists MetroLink boarding and ridership by station and combines the results to show the percentage of riders who board in Illinois, St. Louis City and St. Louis County.

The Cross-County Extension of MetroLink is still in the design stage. A decision by the East-West Gateway Board of Directors on the alignment of phase one was made on June 30, 1999. The new extension is expected to cost \$404 million; \$410 million can be paid with existing tax revenues. It is anticipated that this light rail expansion will be funded entirely with local funds generated by the one-quarter cent Proposition M sales tax which is levied in St. Louis City and County. An estimated 21,500 or more additional people per day will ride the new extension. The Cross-County route will extend from the existing Forest Park

## MetroLink Ridership By Sub-Areas

	Illinois	City of St. Louis	St. Louis County	Total
Westbound	6,4593 2%	12,323 60%	1,6628 38%	20,444 100%
Eastbound	780.42 9%	11,416 62%	7,0123 9%	28,506 100%
Total	6,5371 6%	23,739 58%	8,6742 1%	38,950 *100%

*Source: Bi-State Development Agency, weeks of February 8 through 21. Excludes Special Event Patronage and airport station boardings. Over a one year period, the average weekday ridership is 44,000.*

### ! Call-A-Ride Service

Call-a-Ride is a public demand-response system operated by Bi-State. The system offers customers door-to-door service on a reservation basis. Annual ridership is approximately 431,000 passengers, and 66% of pick-ups and drop-offs are made in St. Louis County. An even higher percentage of customers registered in the Call-A-Ride program (71%) are St. Louis County residents. The service is experiencing increased ridership, with use by persons with disabilities increasing at the fastest rate.

<sup>1</sup> St. Clair and Madison County have their own transit districts and contract services with Bi-State.



## ! **Bicycling**

Currently, the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation is developing a county-wide Bicycle Transportation Program. Part of this project involves examining the feasibility of implementing six bikeways identified in a 1994 regional study for East-West Gateway. These bicycling corridors, comprised of a variety of on-road design treatments and segments of off-road paths, will provide long-distance travel options for biking across sections of St. Louis County.

Implementation will be dependent on a variety of municipal, county and state agencies working together to develop a continuous system of on-street bicycle lanes, wide curb lanes and paved shoulders to facilitate safer bicycle travel on area roadways. Such improvements are likely to be most cost-effectively funded as incidental components of larger roadway improvement projects. They may also qualify for funding independently through grant programs in corridors where no other types of transportation improvements are planned.

Through this project's bicycle planning process, citizen involvement also identified a need for other cross-county bikeways. A connection between the Chain-of-Rocks bridge and the Katy Trail is desired, as well as several improved north/south countywide travel corridors.

However, most of the utilitarian bicycle travel within St. Louis County is likely to be comprised of short distance trips (national average is two miles) to close-to-home destinations. Ironically, it is often the stretches of roadway closest to such destinations that are the most difficult for bicycle travel. Thus, there is a need for additional attention to be paid to bicycle facilities during the planning and design stages of transportation projects located outside of the current six study corridors, especially in areas with more compact land use served by shorter trips.

As previously discussed under accessibility, creating "bikeways" isn't the only action needed. Bicyclists need to be able to safely cross busy roadways and complicated intersections. Hazards to bicycle travel, such as parallel bar drainage grates, need to be systematically removed throughout the County.

Bicycle routes should be developed to intersect with MetroLink stations to encourage multi-modal commuting. Bicycle parking should be routinely provided at all commercial and institutional destinations, and efforts should be undertaken to increase motorist awareness to "share the road" with cyclists.

## ! **Walking**

The other primary non-motorized user group to be served by the transportation system in St. Louis County is pedestrians, including those with mobility impairments. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires special care and specific accommodations to serve the needs of less able individuals.

The sidewalk corridor, street corners and crosswalks are the three components of the transportation system most critical to safe and enjoyable pedestrian travel. As with bicycling, land use and the resulting trip distances contribute significantly to creating pedestrian-friendly areas.

## **Congestion**

According to the St. Louis County Mobility Study prepared by Barton-Aschman and Associates, traffic volumes on a number of major routes are at capacity or above. The key regional routes of I-170, I-270 and Lindbergh Boulevard connecting North, Central and South County suffer from considerable congestion. East-west arteries which experience similar levels of traffic overload include Manchester, Olive, Page and St. Charles Rock Roads. West County's limited number of major arterial roads and segregated land use patterns concentrate traffic on fewer routes, such as Big Bend, Clarkson, and Clayton Roads and Highways 109 and 141. Levels of service (LOS), used to describe the movement of traffic, reach LOS "D" and "F" on many of these roads during the morning and evening rush hours. Interstate 70 west of I-270 is the most heavily traveled highway, with an average daily traffic volume of over 187,000 vehicles per day.

# Indicators of the Need to Address Transportation

Four principal means of information gathering were utilized in determining critical issues which St. Louis County faces in the next several years:

- C Telephone and focus group surveys of St. Louis County residents,**
- C A day-long retreat of senior St. Louis County government officials, including both elected and appointed leaders,**
- C Nine community forums held throughout the County to solicit comment and perspectives from St. Louis County residents, and**
- C A trend analysis conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning (presented in next section).**

Together, these sources of input identified a number of important issues that face St. Louis County. The following discussion summarizes key points regarding the need for focused attention on transportation issues and County government's potential role in formulating a more comprehensive transportation strategy.

## Telephone Survey Results

In February 1999, 617 St. Louis County residents responded to a telephone survey regarding the direction of planning for the County. Residents of unincorporated areas numbered 303 respondents while there were 314 respondents randomly telephoned within municipalities. Respondents were asked a series of questions about the future direction of St. Louis County and the quality of life within St. Louis County. Respondents are generally satisfied with their communities and neighborhoods. Listed below are the results of the transportation related questions asked of respondents.

Expanding the MetroLink system was listed as the highest transportation priority for the St. Louis metropolitan region. Respondents were read a list of nine statements about public issues. Issues included

MetroLink expansion, Lambert Airport, and parks and recreation. Respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of MetroLink. In incorporated areas, 78% either strongly or mostly agreed that "expanding the MetroLink system should be a very high priority for the St. Louis metropolitan region."

While specifics such as funding and routes were not discussed, the survey did ask a follow up question that mentioned the current Cross-County Extension of MetroLink. When respondents were asked if they favored a proposal to "extend MetroLink from the area around Barnes-Jewish Hospital to Washington University, through Clayton, and then south to Shrewsbury", an overwhelming 83% either "strongly favored" or "favored" the proposal.

<b>Percentage of Respondents Who Think MetroLink Should Be a HIGH Priority</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Strongly/Mostly Agree</b>
<b>Incorporated</b>	
North County	83%
NW County	79%
Airport	89%
Central West	90%
West County	83%
South County	89%
<b>Unincorporated</b>	
North County	80%
NW County	50%
Airport	67%
Central West	100%
West County	86%
South County	77%
<i>Source: Attitude Research Company, Survey for St. Louis County</i>	

Residents are generally satisfied with maintenance of St. Louis County roads and bridges. When asked to evaluate the different public services offered by St.

Louis County, road and bridge maintenance fell in the middle of all of the different public services. Police protection ranked the highest, with 93% rating police protection as either excellent or good. Repair and maintenance of county roads and bridges received a 64% satisfaction rating (excellent or good) while maintenance of subdivision roads was slightly lower for unincorporated residents, who gave it a 63% satisfaction rating. While the question specifically asked about County roads, it is not possible to distinguish if respondents can differentiate between roads that are maintained by the County, municipalities or the state.

## County Government Officials

Senior elected and appointed officials of St. Louis County government met for a day of discussion and brainstorming in February 1999 to identify key strategic planning issues from their perspectives. Officials performed a series of exercises in which group members listed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County. After all of the issues were presented, group members voted on their top preferences. With regard to transportation, a number of themes emerged:

- ! Quality of life, expressed in a variety of ways, was very important. St. Louis County's location within the region and nation as well as the current MetroLink system and highway infrastructure were also cited as quality of life strengths of St. Louis County.
- ! Traffic congestion, aging infrastructure and the fact that MetroLink service is too limited were cited as weaknesses facing St. Louis County.
- ! Increasing mass transit was listed as the top opportunity that St. Louis County should use to turn weaknesses into strengths. General transportation infrastructure improvements, such as extending I-170 to South County, were also listed as opportunities that St. Louis County should capitalize on through the strategic planning process. Officials also were supportive of stronger regional planning initiatives which coincide with transportation planning.
- ! Economic downturns and aging infrastructure, both of which affect transportation, were cited as top threats facing St. Louis County. Lack of Bi-

State funding was also cited as a major threat.

## Community Forums

Nine community forums were held throughout St. Louis County in April 1999, to solicit discussion and ideas from County residents. Each forum included a brainstorming session on the strengths and weaknesses of St. Louis County and on the opportunities and threats facing the County. This led to an identification of "critical issues" on which each evening's participants voted. The process enabled the consultants to set apart priority issues from those that, while interesting, did not receive consensus acknowledgment.

The community forum results reinforced the telephone survey and the County government officials' SWOT analysis. Citizens defined the transportation issue very broadly to include traffic congestion, public transportation, and MetroLink expansion. It is important to note that MetroLink expansion was brought up as a critical issue in all of the nine forums throughout St. Louis County. More general transportation and traffic related issues were also cited

### Public Comments Regarding Transportation Issues in St. Louis County

- ' Over half of the respondents cited traffic congestion as a problem facing St. Louis County.
- ' When asked about problems facing the County, 57.1% cited an "inadequate highway system to accommodate morning and evening commutes" as a problem.
- ' Only 3 out of 10 people cited a poorly run public bus system as a common problem, however, this is probably because most County residents do not

as critical issues, but less frequently.

Transportation is a very broad term and one that means different things to different people. Some of the participants cited traffic congestion while others noted the need for better transportation infrastructure. Sidewalks and bike lanes were also described as important to citizens.

It is no surprise that people cited traffic as a critical issue. It is something that people face every day, and this concern will inevitably be brought up in community forums. Perhaps more important, however, were the strong feelings shared about expanding MetroLink. While MetroLink has been a front page topic, the discussions about MetroLink were not about the Cross-County expansion but about the general need for more MetroLink service throughout St. Louis County.

### **Critical Issues Leading to a Need For a Transportation Strategy**

- ' Need for "walkable" communities (sidewalks, bike lanes, improved roads/streets)
- ' Problems related to development driving planning, not planning driving development
- ' Environmental concerns: need to recognize real costs of improvements, prepare impact analyses, watershed management issues
- ' Desire to expand MetroLink and bus transit
- ' Lack of comprehensive transportation planning
- ' Transportation improvements impact on land use

# The Role of St. Louis County and Other Organizations

The issue of transportation is truly a regional issue, as roadways and transportation infrastructure cross all boundaries. The St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic is one of three entities within St. Louis County government involved with transportation-related issues. Other departments include the Department of Planning, through its site plan review process, and the Department of Parks and Recreation, which coordinates bicycle and pedestrian projects. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT), East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC), Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State), and municipalities all share responsibility for portions of the St. Louis County transportation system. This section outlines the role that St. Louis County as well as local, state and regional organizations have in transportation.

## St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic

The St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic is responsible for design, construction, maintenance, repair, and traffic control for all roads, sidewalks and bridges that comprise the County Road System. As their department's name suggests, the Department of Highways and Traffic is not a comprehensive transportation department, but rather, focuses on auto facilities. This department oversees the public roads in the unincorporated areas and 414 miles of major roads (Arterial Road System) in both unincorporated and municipal areas. In total, the Department of Highways and Traffic is responsible for about 35% of the more than 4,800 miles of roads within St. Louis County. The County's responsibilities include:

- ! **Maintenance**
- ! **Pavement striping and signage**
- ! **Snow removal**
- ! **Infrastructure replacement**

### ! **Major capital improvements**

In recent years, the department has improved its communication with County residents by holding community meetings to gain feedback from residents about capital improvements. In 1997, the Department of Highways and Traffic initiated a county-wide public engagement process and held "Transportation Needs Forums" in all seven St. Louis County Council Districts to gain citizen feedback on road, bridge, street and transportation topics. These transportation forums will be held every three years.

The department does not have a long-range plan, nor is there a continuing funding mechanism for long-term road improvements. The department does however, compile a "needs list" of potential roadway capital improvement program (CIP) needs. This list however, does not provide any budget data, as many of the "needs" have not undergone a design process or a cost analysis to determine the cost of improvements.

The needs list is prioritized based on the CIP rating system described below. Lacking a long-range plan, the County has submitted the "needs list" in place of a long-range plan to incorporate into other plans, such as EWGCC's Transportation Redefined II long-range plan. Funding for the County road systems comes from the Transportation Trust Fund, federal and state funds, and property taxes. A detailed financial breakdown of funding sources is outlined in the chart below.

### ! **Financial Resources and Expenditures**

To carry out any type of strategy, it is crucial to have sufficient resources. This is especially important because of the shifts in federal and state funds, and the changing transportation needs within St. Louis County. Ultimately, through the Strategic Planning Process, the Task Force and department heads will need to assign budgets and costs for implementing the strategic plan.

The sources of funding for transportation projects

come from the following areas:

- ! Transportation trust fund (1/2-cent sales tax)
- ! Mass transit sales tax (1/4-cent dedicated to Bi-State)
- ! Federal reimbursements
- ! State County Aid Road Trust fund (CART)
- ! Property taxes
- ! Other county fees, surcharges, interest income

In 1998, the overall investment, defined as revenue or income, in transportation services being made in St. Louis County is summarized in the following table. Of these revenues, approximately \$74 million, or 51%, was invested in County roads and over \$70 million was invested in the transit system (via Bi-State).

<b>1998 Transportation Revenues</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Funds (in millions)</b>
1/2-Cent Transportation Sales Tax*	\$74.9
1/4-Cent Transportation Sales Tax for Bi-State	34.5
Federal Reimbursements	3.2
State Aid (CART)	13.5
Property taxes	3.6
Other county fees, surcharges, interest	4.0
Carryover from 1997	6.2
Fleet management service fees	5.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$144.9</b>

Source: St. Louis County Departments of Highways & Traffic and Administration  
 Note: \$36 million of the 1/2-cent sales taxes was dedicated to Bi-State.  
 \* 1/2-Cent Transportation Sales Tax figure includes \$69 million in tax revenue and \$5.9 million in interest.

The breakdown of funds for St. Louis County transportation purposes:

**! Transportation Trust Fund.** 1/2 Cent

Transportation Sales Tax. This tax generates approximately \$69 million. Approximately \$36 million goes directly to Bi-State and the remainder in this fund is allocated to the Arterial Road System (ARS) according to the County Executive and County Council.

**! MetroLink Sales Tax.** 1/4 Cent Transportation Sales Tax. This tax generates approximately \$34.5 million. Per state statute, all funds are dedicated to transit and allocated to Bi-State for transit.

**! Federal Reimbursements.** The use of federal aid is through a reimbursement relationship and funds a portion of the County's capital improvement projects. The County provides the cash up front for roadway improvement projects and then applies for reimbursement. Federal funds are allocated by the EWGCC through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a schedule of transportation improvement projects for a three-year time period for the entire St. Louis region. EWGCC employs a funding allocation/prioritization formula and St. Louis County competes for federal dollars among all of the eight counties that are under EWGCC. Federal funding through the TIP usually covers between 50 to 80% of the project cost.

**! State Aid (County Aid Road Trust Fund (CART)).** State aid comes from state imposed user fees such as the motor vehicle fuel tax, the motor vehicle sales tax and fee increases for licenses and titles. This money is distributed to municipalities, counties and MODOT based on a set formula. St. Louis County has received on average about \$11.5 million per year since 1993.

**! Property Taxes**

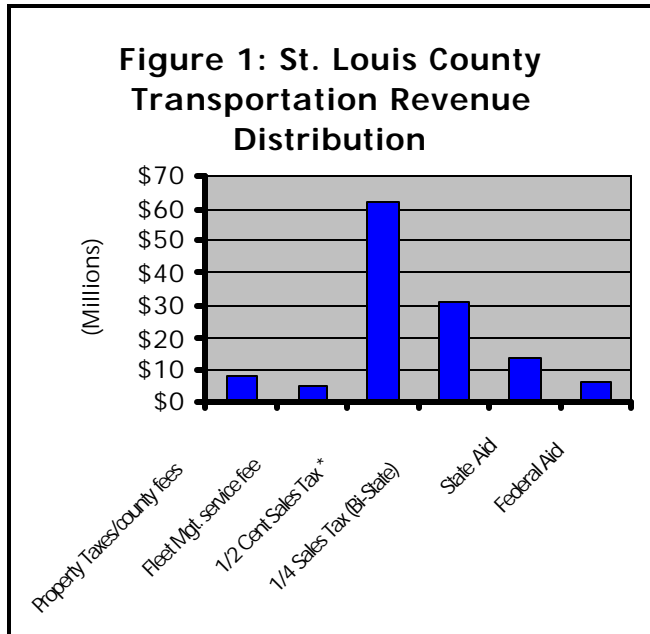
**, Road and Bridge Property Tax.** A county-wide 10.5 cent ad valorem tax. In municipal areas, 100% of the road and bridge property tax goes directly back to the municipality generating them, and in unincorporated areas, the County receives 100% of taxes generated.

**Other County Fees, surcharges, and Interest Income.** In total, these fees generate around \$5 million annually. This includes cable TV fees, which generate funds for stormwater projects in unincorporated St. Louis County, and the Merchants & Manufacturer's Surcharge which is used to fund the County Road System and the Special Road and Bridge fund.

The chart below shows that the principal source of funding comes from St. Louis County via the Transportation Trust Fund, which is protected by law for transportation use only. The County is only dependent on external resources in a limited way; thus, transportation services within the County are more or less self-reliant. Because state and federal funding could decrease in the future, this is a good position for St. Louis County. However, the potential income is a function of the economic vitality of the County. While sales tax revenues have grown much faster than property tax revenues, internet sales and overall growth trends in St. Louis County will effect the real growth potential in revenue.

the past twenty years.

<b>History of Bond Issues</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1981	Proposal for new County Jail	Failed	46%	54%
1986	Proposition A - Roads	Passed	76%	24%
1986	Proposition B - Parks & Recreation	Passed	70%	30%
1986	Proposition C - Police & Fire	Passed	77%	23%
1986	Proposition D - Stormwater Control	Passed	72%	28%
1986	Proposition E - Lakeside Center	Passed	71%	29%
1993	Proposition A - St. Louis County Justice Center	Passed	63%	37%



Source: St. Louis County, 1999

As St. Louis County ages, long-term funding mechanisms for long-term road and capital improvements may need to be established. The following table summarizes bond issue elections from

## EAST-WEST GATEWAY COORDINATING COUNCIL

East-West Gateway Coordinating Council affects St. Louis County both indirectly and directly. East-West Gateway affects the amount of federal transportation funds that St. Louis County receives, as all requests for federal funding are approved through East-West Gateway, the St. Louis area's metropolitan planning organization (MPO). As the MPO, EWGCC sets spending priorities for transportation and leads the way on planning for major transportation projects, such as bridges, freeways and transit systems. Through such programs as Bridges to Work, EWGCC has also taken an active role in initiating a mobility program designed to connect job-seekers in urban communities with growing employment opportunities in western St. Louis County.

## **BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

As discussed earlier in this document, the Bi-State Development Agency provides bus and light rail service in the St. Louis region. Bi-State's operating budget for 1998 was \$119 million. St. Louis County supports Bi-State through a one-half cent transportation sales tax and a one-quarter cent MetroLink sales tax. St. Louis County's contributions made up 37% of Bi-State's 1998 operating budget. Annual appropriations are approved for Bi-State through the St. Louis County Council.

## **MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) is responsible for maintenance and construction of the interstate highway system in St. Louis County as well as a number of major arterial roads. The County contains 152 miles of interstate highways controlled by MODOT.

## **COUNTY DEPARTMENTS**

The Department of Planning is an important partner with the Department of Highways and Traffic because so many of the decisions made depend on and affect transportation. The Departments of Highways and Traffic, Planning and Public Works serve as a three-part team from County government in reviewing proposed developments. MSD also participates in site plan review.

The interaction between the Department of Highways and Traffic and the Department of Planning begins with the zoning review process. The Department of Highways and Traffic reviews site plans and comments on designs of rezoning proposals. If the Planning Commission chooses to approve a proposed rezoning, the Department of Highways and Traffic then recommends what is necessary in terms of roadway improvements. Until recently, Highways had a similar role with regard to stormwater control, but MSD now

controls design requirements for stormwater removal.

In addition to reviewing zoning proposals in conjunction with the Department of Planning, the Department of Highways and Traffic is responsible for review of engineering documents and improvement plans submitted for the approval of subdivision plats for commercial, residential and industrial developments.

The Department of Highways and Traffic can require certain improvements to occur prior to approval of a development. Developers are often required to make additional improvements, such as sidewalks, as part of a development plan.

In 1998, the position of Transportation and Redevelopment Policy Administrator was developed jointly by the Department of Planning and the County Executive's office. This new position serves as a liaison between the County Executive's office and transportation agencies such as the Bi-State Development Agency, East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, and the Missouri Department of Transportation.

# Best Practices From Around the Country: Transportation Initiatives

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Many local communities, metropolitan planning organizations, state and local governments are re-thinking their approach to transportation. As St. Louis County begins to look at ways to implement a strategic plan for transportation, there are a number of approaches, both locally and nationally that the County can look to for examples and innovative thinking. Studying other local governments provides concrete examples of possible funding initiatives and strategic partnerships. There are still many lessons to be learned as transportation planning is being redefined at all government levels--federal, state and local. In many ways, in fact, the St. Louis region, and St. Louis County are changing how government agencies approach transportation.

## Taking a Comprehensive and Coordinated Approach

### ! Montgomery County, Maryland Overview

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation is organized to develop and implement a multi-modal transportation program. Much like the St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic, the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation is responsible for the design, construction, maintenance, repair, and traffic control of all of the county roads, sidewalks, and bridges that comprise the County Road System. In addition, the department also oversees its own bus system, Ride On, which is tightly integrated into the region's metrobus and metrorail system plus bikeways, parking and mass transit facilities. Each of the department's responsibilities (i.e. roads, mass transit, Bike paths) receives a separate line in the six-year capital improvement program.

General obligation bonds, general funds and impact taxes provide funds for infrastructure planning, construction and maintenance services. Projects are also supported by such dedicated funding sources as

the Mass Transit Fund and revenue from parking, in addition to state and federal aid.

Major projects are developed in accordance with the various area master plans within Montgomery County. In addition to the traditional transportation divisions (e.g., highway services, fleet management, engineering services), the Department of Public Works and Transportation also has an Office of Project Development that houses many of the coordinating functions.

Every transportation function that is operated by an outside organization, such as the Maryland State Highway Administration, has its own separate staff contact that coordinates projects to ensure that those projects are in accordance with the County's Master plan. In order to guarantee good communication with the public, the Department has a general information desk. Every day a staff member is designated as the "Planner of the Day" to answer general transportation questions from citizens. The department also has an extensive website that lists staff contacts for all of the divisions, as well as the six-year capital improvement program, and links to all of the web sites of its partnering agencies.

#### Contact:

Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation  
Office of Project Development  
101 Monroe Street: 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850  
(301) 217-2145  
[www.dpwt.com](http://www.dpwt.com)

## Increasing the Flexibility of Mass Transit

Traditional fixed route/fixed schedule transit services may not meet the needs of today's spread out work schedules. Most regional transit providers are finding

that they need to reconfigure their schedules as well as redesign their routes, now that the downtown central business district is not the dominant employment destination. Fulfilling the need for flexible services in lower-density areas requires innovative and flexible transportation options.

St. Louis County has traditionally played a passive role in transit planning as compared to road and highway planning. The County's involvement with transit has not been as a direct service provider but rather as a funding agent and planning participant. What should St. Louis County's role be? Listed below are examples of county departments and regional transit organizations that are looking at innovative and flexible transportation options.

**Montgomery County, Maryland**, like St. Louis County was once a small bedroom community. Beginning in the 1970's, population exploded and jobs followed people to the suburbs. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Metrobus and Metrorail and the Maryland Commuter Rail provided excellent access to the central business district but did not provide a means of intercounty commuting or reverse commutes. Montgomery County responded by establishing its own feeder system to move people around the county and increase accessibility to the services of the primary providers.

**HubLink in Western New York** is a proposed comprehensive and coordinated public transportation system designed to enhance mobility. The HubLink study, which was undertaken by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), included a comprehensive public participation program and a full analysis of public transportation needs and demand and examination of the deficiencies in the present system.

The HubLink service concept builds upon the existing public transportation resource, including the MetroRail, fixed-route bus services, paratransit service, transit centers and park-and-ride facilities. HubLink will introduce new services using smaller vehicles around the hubs to provide for local circulation and feeder trips. A key element of the HubLink plan is an increased reliance on hubs, where passengers can access and transfer conveniently between already

established transit services.

The identification of new funding sources was a major component of the study. To supplement user fares, federal, state and local transit funding, the plan looks to partner with human service agencies, municipalities, and private employers for additional funding. The plan has identified the potential for private dollars to fund between 9 and 16% of the additional capital funds needed for the HubLink plan.

**Contact:**

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority  
 181 Ellicott Street  
 Buffalo, New York 14203  
 (716) 855-7638

**Local Jurisdictions Working Together: King County, Washington**

King County is the largest of four counties that make up the Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area. The county includes 39 municipalities, including the cities of Seattle and Bellevue, as well as unincorporated areas.

An increase in annexations during the late 1980's and early 1990's as well as the establishment of growth boundaries created the need for King County to re-think its role in transportation. In response, the county created subarea transportation boards, composed of elected officials from local jurisdictions and King County, transportation agency representatives, and the private sector.

The mission of subarea transportation boards is to provide forums for sharing information and building consensus to solve common transportation problems. King County provides the staffing necessary to coordinate decision-making and advancing of multi-modal transportation improvements. To date, three boards have been established in King County, and each board has developed a subarea plan

Activities of the board include: 1) setting a six-year transit plan policy direction and allocating new King County Metro transit service subsidies, 2) developing recommendations for countywide ISTE funds within each subarea, and 3) providing recommendations for policy direction on Sound Transit (the new regional transit provider) plan implementation within each subarea.

The subarea boards have had to overcome and continue to deal with the surrounding skepticism among the different jurisdictions. Over the past five years, however, the boards have developed into effective forums for inter-jurisdictional cooperation. The development of the individual boards has been aided by the Growth Management Act (GMA) that requires each jurisdiction to have a comprehensive plan. Each comprehensive plan must comply with the regional comprehensive plan of the metropolitan planning organization. Boards are set up in such a way that each elected official representing a city or the county (county council members in subarea) has one vote. Participation by individual jurisdictions is voluntary.

## **Creating Bike-Friendly and Walkable Communities**

There are several communities that have established programs and institutionalized policies to improve local conditions for bicycling and walking. At the county level of government, Hennepin County, Minnesota, Maricopa County, Arizona, King County, Washington, Somerset County, New Jersey, and Dane County, Wisconsin may serve as case studies for best practices.

The State of Illinois provides a good role model for a mechanism to ensure that non-motorized needs are considered in the planning and design phases of all transportation improvements. The Illinois Department of Transportation has adopted policies and procedures for accommodating bicycle travel in highway projects (IDOT DBE Procedure Memorandum 95-21). Roadway planners and engineers are requested to complete a simple checklist to gauge what level of bicycling activity might be present in a

given corridor based upon land use and connections with other facilities; and then, as deemed necessary, plan for bicycle accommodation as a part of the construction project. Several communities nationwide have developed similar scoping checklists for determining the need for sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements.

### **Contact:**

Craig L. Williams  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator  
Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Highways  
2300 South Dirksen Parkway  
Springfield, IL 62764  
(217) 785-2148

# Defining St. Louis County's Role in Transportation

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Could and should St. Louis County be a more proactive force in the area of transportation? There are several potential strategies that St. Louis County can take in strengthening its role in transportation. One potential option, of course, is to remain at the status quo. But it is presumed that the status quo is not acceptable.

The following options are just that--options. They are not yet recommendations. They arise from identified problems and from approaches tried both within the St. Louis area and by other communities. Whatever strategies are pursued, it is important that political, economic, and social realities be taken into consideration. It is also important that strategies be initiated and have measurable outcomes within the next five years.

## Option 1 - Land Use and Transportation Plan

One such proactive step could be to establish a land use and transportation plan. The latest future land use map for the County was prepared in 1980, and that document has been characterized as "reactive as opposed to proactive". Development of the plan could be part of an overall planning effort initiated through a partnership with East-West Gateway. The plan should prescribe future highway and transit facilities as well as aviation, port, and intermodal freight facilities. The plan should incorporate the current bike path plan that the Department of Parks and Recreation is initiating.

### ! Obstacles

The large number of municipalities and lack of coordinated land use planning which characterize St. Louis County, as discussed earlier in this paper, present obstacles to combining future land use and transportation planning. However, the very presence of these obstacles may be cause for St. Louis County to take on more of a leadership role in coordinating land use and transportation planning.

## Option 2 - Proactive Role in Future Transit Services

Should St. Louis County take a more proactive role in transit services? Possible roles could be the funding of expansion components such as station development, supporting facilities and services, and right-of-way acquisition. Currently, transit decisions come under the domain of the County Executive's Office, where a County Transportation Commission composed of citizen members appointed by the County Executive meets bi-weekly to consider bus service changes and make recommendations on modification in bus routes and headways. These and other transit issues, including the routes and financing for new rail transit services, are debated as issues of public policy significance at the highest level of the County, with recommendations made to the County Executive and the County Council.

### ! Obstacles

Monies in the Transportation Trust Fund, which are generated by a one-half cent transportation sales tax, are used for both transit and road improvement purposes. Missouri state law (RSMo. 94.600) specifically allows St. Louis County to use revenues from the Transportation Trust Fund for construction, repair, and maintenance of its Arterial Road System. Diverting additional monies from this fund for mass transit use means that there will be fewer resources available for St. Louis County roads. Political resistance to increasing the amount of money allotted to the Bi-State Development Agency from this fund has been strong.

## Option 3 - Promote Multi-modal Facilities

Implementing the bikeway facility treatments being recommended as part of the County Parks and Recreation Department's current Bicycle Transportation

Program study is a logical first step. A mechanism may be easily created, following the Illinois DOT model, to routinely assess the need for bicycle accommodation as a part of all new development and roadway improvement projects located within St. Louis County. The need for sidewalks, safe roadway crossings and other pedestrian facilities should be incorporated into a similar scoping checklist as well.

Finally, to help people get to train stations, consideration should be given to developing non-motorized facilities that intersect, rather than parallel, existing and future MetroLink lines.

### **! Obstacles**

For the past several decades, transportation spending decisions have been made primarily to benefit the automobile. Engineering design formulas are calculated to move the greatest number of cars at the highest speeds, often without consideration of the impact on non-motorized users. In addition, many people view bicycling and walking as special interest recreational activities rather than personal transportation options. These factors -- combined with a lack of existing facilities -- means that few people currently get around on foot or bike, making it difficult to justify additional spending based upon current demand. Yet studies show that more people would bike and walk more often given multi-modal infrastructure improvements.

## **Option 4 - Establish an Annual County Capital Budget**

The annual budget should include improvements that benefit bicycles and/or pedestrians as integral components of the transportation system. Sidewalk construction should be mandatory. Intersections should be designed to safely accommodate motorized as well as non-motorized users. And minimal levels of bicycle accommodation should be routine. State/Federal grants should be sought for high-cost projects such as trail construction and bridge retrofit; however the required matching local funds (often 20%) will need to come from a combination of County and municipal budgets.

## **Option 5 - Implement a Jurisdictional Highway Plan**

The County arterial road system has major gaps in it as county roads turn into municipal roads, which turn into state roads, and then back into county roads. A jurisdictional highway plan would consist of the County, municipal, and State of Missouri officials agreeing on functional criteria for roads under the jurisdiction of municipalities, the County, and the state. These criteria would then be applied to each arterial street and highway in the County, and the appropriate jurisdiction determined.

### **! Obstacles**

Many of the municipalities are reluctant to give up control of roads that are under their jurisdiction, even if they should be classified as County Arterial roads, because of their desire to control rights-of-way within their borders. For financial reasons, there is an unwillingness by some to have the County take over roads, even if they would be better managed by St. Louis County.

## **Option 6 - Increasing Public Participation**

While the St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic has initiated a public engagement process on the County's five-year road needs, and the Department of Planning holds various public meetings throughout the year, there is still a need for gathering citizen input regarding transportation issues. Typically, residents show little interest in transportation planning until lines are drawn on a map showing approved road projects, and then negative comments from those whose properties are most directly impacted are usually heard instead of those who are in support.

# References and Resources

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Significant federal and state legislation, as well as local policies, have been adopted to alter the way transportation projects and policies are implemented. This paper has attempted to outline the current and possible future roles of St. Louis County government within the overall framework of transportation. However, because the County is just one of many organizations that oversees transportation projects and policy related issues, it is important to view the role of the County and the impact of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan within the overall regional context. Listed below are studies that will need to be coordinated to address the strategic issue of transportation in St. Louis County.

## East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC)

- ! **Transportation Redefined II 2020 Regional Transportation Plan.** Update of *Transportation Redefined*. A Comprehensive long-range transportation plan for the region. Federal law requires that the plan be updated every three years and that it conforms to federal air quality requirements. March 1999. (*Transportation Redefined* was adopted in 1994).
- ! **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** The TIP covers the first three years of the long-range plan. It covers federal funds for specific surface transportation projects. Funding allocations in the TIP are guided by goals and focus areas set in place by *Transportation Redefined*, the region's long-range transportation plan.
- ! **Congestion Management Issue Paper.** Analyzes one of the seven focus areas established in *Transportation Redefined*, August 1998.
- ! **Transportation and Sustainable Development Issue Paper.** Analyzes one of the seven focus areas established in

*Transportation Defined*, August 1998.

## St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic

- ! **Strategy for a Mobility Plan Serving St. Louis County.** This report was commissioned by the Department of Highways and Traffic and was completed in May 1997. The report outlines the existing mobility conditions, estimates future mobility conditions and provides 11 recommendations.
- ! **St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic 1997 Annual Report.** Outlines the achievements of the Department of Highways and Traffic's six divisions (Division of General Services, Division of Highway Planning, Division of Highway Design, Division of Construction, Division of Maintenance, Division of Traffic).
- ! **St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic Capital Improvement Program 1998-2002.** Prepared in June 1998. While the County prepares a list of capital improvements for funding purposes, the 1998-2002 list is the first comprehensive list of capital improvements compiled by the Department of Highways and Traffic.

## Other Studies:

! **St. Louis County Bicycle Transportation Program, by Bicycles &, Inc. for the St. Louis County Parks and Recreation Department, through funding from Missouri Department of Transportation, 1999.**

This is the first phase of implementation for projects and programs outlined in the 1994 St. Louis Regional Bicycle Facilities Plan. The three-part study is focusing on 1) determining the feasibility of six proposed cross-county bicycle corridors; 2) obtaining ongoing citizen involvement in bikeway planning; and 3) developing materials for use in driver education curriculums to teach motorists and cyclists how to share the road.

# Strategic Issue: Unincorporated Services

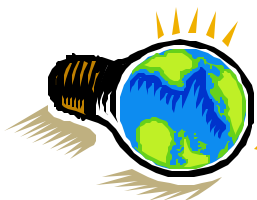


## Trends Impacting Unincorporated Services

Unincorporated residents comprise nearly a third of the County's total population. The current population of unincorporated St. Louis County is 330,000. On that basis, St. Louis County government is the principal local service provider for the second largest "city" in the region and the third largest in Missouri.

St. Louis County government delivers basic services to unincorporated areas, including police protection, street maintenance, snow removal, code enforcement, and zoning. Fluctuations in the unincorporated population due to annexations and incorporations impact the revenue available to deliver quality services to residents. In some unincorporated neighborhoods, residents want increased services, such as improved trash collection and curb-side recycling.

Over the years, municipalities have annexed areas of unincorporated St. Louis County. A majority of the annexed areas have included commercial and industrial development, while excluding older residential subdivisions. Consequently, unincorporated areas have a high ratio of older housing, with more than half constructed prior to 1970. Aging neighborhoods often require higher levels of service, including property maintenance programs and increased code enforcement.



## Perspectives on Unincorporated Services

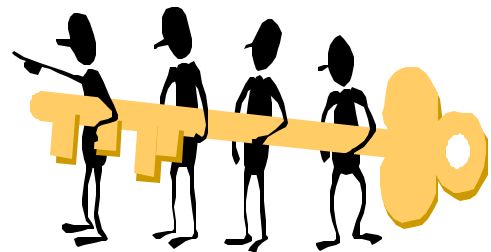
County officials tend to look at the issue of unincorporated services from a fiscal standpoint. The ability to fund and deliver quality services is threatened by annexations and incorporations.

According to a telephone survey, only 36% of unincorporated residents want all of unincorporated St. Louis County to become part of a municipality compared to half of incorporated residents.

In an evaluation of public services, unincorporated residents indicated in the opinion poll that they were least satisfied with curbside recycling.

The publication of a County newsletter was favored by 72% of unincorporated residents surveyed.

## Key Themes from Unincorporated Services



- ' Unincorporated residents are generally satisfied with the services they receive from St. Louis County government. However, the ways the County tracks its performance can be enhanced to determine the effectiveness of services delivered and to make improvements as needed.
- ' The dynamic nature of funding sources creates a greater need for St. Louis County government to look beyond traditional finance measures. A new budgeting practice can also gauge the quality of services delivered to residents.
- ' Communication between St. Louis County government and its residents can be improved. St. Louis County government can maximize its use of media and technology to not only inform citizens, but

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# Introduction: The Case for Delivering Unincorporated Services

Providing services for the common good is one of the core reasons for government to exist. People rightfully have needs and expectations to which government should be sensitive. St. Louis County must pro-actively deal with the service delivery issues, so that problems can be alleviated before they become too difficult to change efficiently and effectively.

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The responsibility for providing local government services in St. Louis County is divided among an excess of 150 political jurisdictions. Service delivery requires coordination with more than 90 municipalities, numerous special districts, and many other government entities on the state and federal level.

St. Louis County simultaneously performs like two separate governments. First, St. Louis County must provide a certain minimum level of service based upon state mandates of all counties. Second, St. Louis County's first-class home-rule charter status adds a greater degree of services needing to be delivered, especially to citizens of unincorporated areas. For example, St. Louis County government provides countywide services such as property assessment and voter registration, and provides municipal services, such as zoning and police protection, to its unincorporated areas.

The St. Louis County five-year strategic plan from 1990-1995 mentioned this "dual role" of St. Louis County government. It stated "how best to ensure consistent services among the County's many communities is a highly charged question without easy answers.... The dual role of St. Louis County government as a provider of municipal-type services, as well as provider of countywide and specialized services is another issue that continues to be studied." Now in 1999, it remains a central issue in St. Louis County government.

For the purposes of this issue paper, the following definitions of terms are offered for clarification:

## ! **County**

A "county" is set up by the state on the state's own initiative to serve as a kind of political outpost of state

government, applying state laws and administering state business at the local level (including law and order, public health, record keeping). Counties are not created at the behest of their inhabitants nor are they intended to serve citizens' unique governmental needs. (Lorch, *State and Local Government*, 238)

## ! **Municipality**

A "municipality" or "city" is a municipal corporation that is chartered by the state at the petition of a group of people, much the same way a private corporation is chartered. Municipalities are created for a variety of reasons, but usually it is to exercise some level of control over decision-making important to a cluster of residents. (Lorch, *State and Local Government*, 267)

The major premise of this issue paper is to examine the three most critical future challenges of unincorporated service delivery: fragmentation, communication, and financing in order to ensure quality service provision for the unincorporated residents of St. Louis County in the future. With respect to the County's service delivery systems, do the current processes of service delivery meet the needs of countywide residents, especially in the unincorporated areas of St. Louis County? Are there services that St. Louis county should be providing, or conversely, should not be providing? It is these important questions that will be explored and analyzed in this issue paper.

# Background Data and Trends

Service delivery in St. Louis County has been complicated by the complexity of overlapping jurisdictions and the near-impossibility of system-wide communication. Analyzing the County's ability to finance government services becomes challenging because of the complicated nature of the system. Annexations and incorporations displace populations who would normally receive municipal-type services from the County. Another factor is that municipalities also contract with St. Louis County for services, thereby making tracking service delivery costs on a unit basis even more confusing.

## Service Delivery Fragmentation

Fragmentation has been an issue challenging St. Louis County for many years. St. Louis County is divided among more than 200 political jurisdictions, including St. Louis County, 91 municipalities, 23 schools districts, and 43 municipal fire departments and fire protection districts. To further complicate the situation, there are library districts, police jurisdictions, and special taxing districts.

The 91 municipalities range in population from 11 residents in the Village of Champ to 54,000 residents in the City of Florissant. Nearly 60% of the County's municipalities are small with populations of less than 5,000. Some of the larger municipalities provide a complete line of services to their residents, including police protection, trash removal, street maintenance, parks, and community centers. Many of the smaller municipalities provide minimal services to their residents and rely on other municipalities or St. Louis County for the provision of local services. The system of service delivery in a fragmented jurisdiction makes both budgeting and communication about county services challenging.

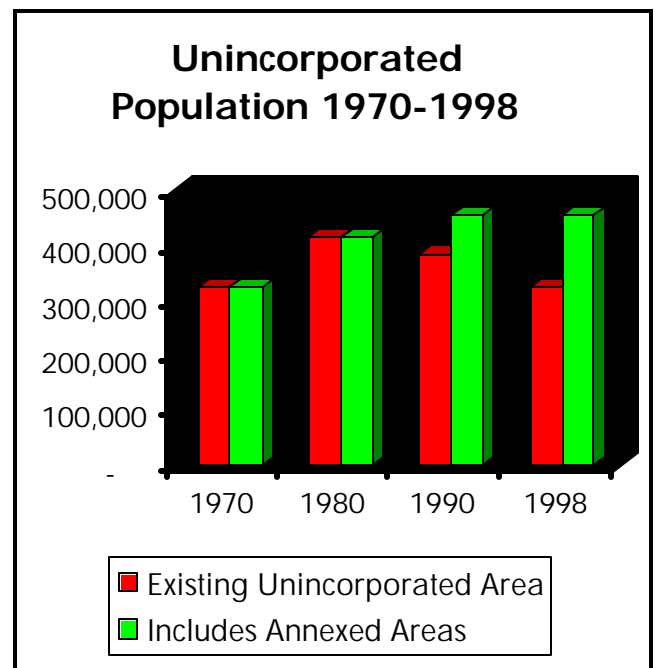
## The Impact of Annexations and Incorporations

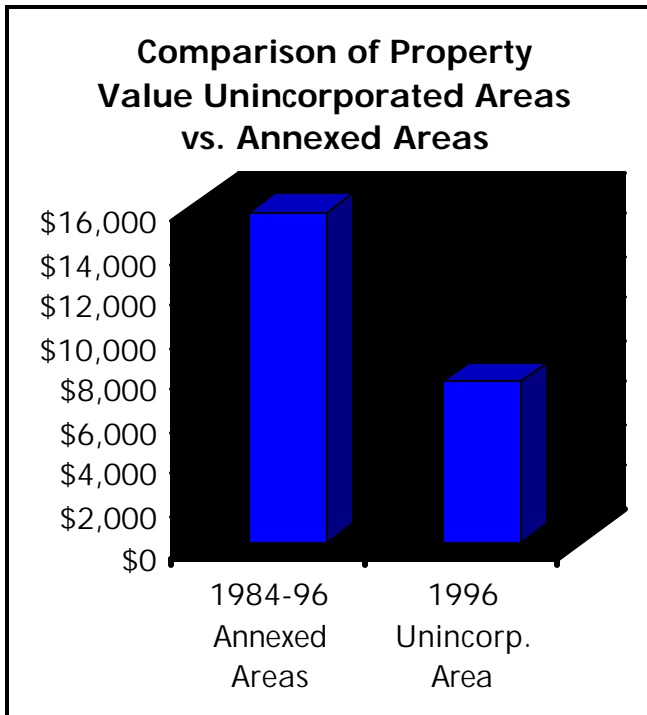
Nearly 60% of County residents live in municipalities and the rest live in unincorporated areas. Annexations and incorporations have expanded the population and size of some of the municipalities, while reducing the area and population of unincorporated St. Louis County. Today there are approximately 330,000

people living in unincorporated St. Louis County that depend upon the County for municipal-type services. On that basis, St. Louis County government is the principal local service provider for the second largest "city" in the region and the third largest in Missouri.

In the last decade, however, there has been a dramatic shift in the number of residents living in unincorporated areas, over a 20% decline. This change in population also represents a change in the tax base that pays for services. The property value in areas that have been annexed since 1984 to 1996 is approximately twice the amount as the unincorporated area in 1996.

The financial impact of these boundary changes has not been felt in the 1990's because of the following reasons:





Source: St. Louis County

- ! Overall growth of the economy
- ! Increases in state and federal funding
- ! Increased contract services
- ! Sales tax changes

However, it must be recognized that the favorable financial climate of the 1990's will not last forever. An economic downturn could impact future service delivery.

## Contracting Services

Not only does St. Louis County maintain the duality of its roles as county-wide and municipal service provider, it also enters into contracts with municipalities, school districts, and fire protection districts to deliver services, namely police protection and code enforcement. The St. Louis County Police Department offers an array of services ranging from patrol to having School Resource Officers present in the school system. Municipal and fire district contracts for services are complex, due to the variety of inspection services that may have exclusions, such as for commercial property only.

## ST. LOUIS COUNTY AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

Area	Population
St. Louis County Total Population	993,508
Unincorporated Population	324,456
Service	Population Served
Police Protection	362,228 Residents
Code Enforcement	465,633 Residents
Police Service	15 Municipalities
School Resource Officers	10 School Districts
Dispatching	15 Municipalities
Police Report Writing	8 Municipalities
Building Code	32 Municipalities
Mechanical Code	60 Municipalities
Electrical Code	71 Municipalities
Plumbing Code	67 Municipalities
Explosives Ordinance	50 Fire Districts
Property Maintenance	14 Municipalities
Fire Sprinkler Systems	31 Fire Districts
Elevator	86 Municipalities
Amusement Devices	69 Municipalities
Periodic Mechanical Inspections	58 Municipalities

# Indicators of the Need for Unincorporated Services

Four principal means of information gathering were utilized in determining critical issues which St. Louis County faces in the next several years: focus groups and a telephone survey of St. Louis County residents, a one-day retreat of St. Louis County government officials, trend analysis conducted by the St. Louis County Department of Planning, and nine community forums throughout the County to solicit comment and perspectives from St. Louis County residents. Together, these methods identified four critical issues facing St. Louis County:

- ! The County’s Role in the Region
- ! Reinvestment in Older Communities
- ! Transportation
- ! Services to Unincorporated Areas

The following discussion summarizes key points regarding the need for focused attention on the County’s delivery of services to unincorporated areas.

## Telephone Survey and Focus Groups

In December 1998, Attitude Research Company (ARC) conducted a series of focus groups on behalf of St. Louis County Department of Planning. Focus groups were comprised of residents of unincorporated and incorporated areas of St. Louis County. In February 1999, ARC administered a telephone survey of 617 St. Louis County residents. Respondents were asked a series of questions about the future direction of St. Louis County and the quality of life within St. Louis County. Key comments and findings from the ARC research reveal how County residents currently view unincorporated services and how it could strengthen its position in this regard.

Overall, the survey data indicates that St. Louis County generally does a good job at delivering services. Most survey respondents are enjoying a good quality of life in St. Louis County and are satisfied with their community, neighborhood, and the services being received. The following table lists the specific results of the service delivery related questions by percentage. The percentages equal the amount of citizens who believe their public service delivery is excellent or good.

<b>UNINCORPORATED SERVICE SATISFACTION</b>	
<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>% WHO FEEL SERVICE IS EXCELLENT OR GOOD</b>
Police Protection	92.1%
County Park and Recreation Programs	82.9%
Storm Water Control	68.0%
Maintenance of Roads	64.7%
Maintenance of Subdivision Streets	62.7%
Trash Collection	62.4%
Snow Removal	59.1%
Code Enforcement	58.5%
County-wide Planning	56.4%
County Health Services	54.5%
Economic Development	46.9%
Curbside Recycling	38.6%

## Government Officials Retreat

Elected officials of St. Louis County government, department directors, and key staff met for a day of discussion and brainstorming in February, 1999 to identify key strategic planning issues from their perspectives. Officials performed a series of exercises in which group members listed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County over the next several years. After all of the issues were presented, group members voted on their top preferences. With regard to service delivery, a number of themes emerged:

- ! **Low tax burden**
- ! **Fragmentation**
- ! **Communication**
- ! **County and Municipal Relations**

The wealth of St. Louis County affords it with a low tax burden. Out of the four small discussion groups, all listed this issue as a major strength that the County can build on over the next few years.

Fragmentation causes inefficient service delivery. Participants felt that the issue of fragmentation umbrellas most issues and weakens the County overall. It is especially difficult to deal with in the context of service delivery to unincorporated areas and to municipalities.

Enhancing public relations was an issue identified by all four small groups. This issue was typically viewed as an opportunity for St. Louis County to sustain itself by being in greater touch with the citizens.

The complex relationship between St. Louis County and the 91 municipalities has been a critical issue for many years. The County officials who engaged in this retreat still place this issue at the top of the list as a potential threat that could have devastating repercussions of the efficiency and effectiveness of government in St. Louis County.

## Trend Analysis

A 1999-2001 moratorium on incorporation within the County has stabilized this part of the environment temporarily. Many unincorporated County citizens believe that incorporating to achieve better distribution of services would result in higher taxes and an extra layer of government, though this is not a unanimous feeling. It appears that the status of unincorporated areas is not likely to change during the 2000 strategic plan period. This may change under the new boundary commission after 2001.

## Community Forums

Nine community forums were held throughout St. Louis County in April 1999, to solicit discussion and ideas from County residents. Like the government officials retreat, each forum included a brainstorming session on the strengths, weaknesses opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing St. Louis County. The SWOT exercise led to the identification of critical issues, as participants voted for their top concerns.

The critical issues identified by residents at the community forums reinforced the telephone survey results and the County government officials SWOT analysis conducted at the retreat. Citizens recognized that service delivery is an important issue that deals with many different levels of County Government. The critical issues emulating from the community forums dealing with service delivery include:

- ! **Parks, recreation, and open spaces.** An issue usually associated with land use and urban sprawl, the residents of St. Louis County held high regard for the parks they frequent.
- ! **Government Services.** Citizens listed snow removal, code enforcement, trash collection, and storm water drainage control as some of the chief services that need improvement in their neighborhoods.
- ! **Quality of housing.** Residents pointed out that there is a lack of code enforcement, causing properties to deteriorate and property values to decline in both unincorporated areas and some municipalities.

- ! **Communication.** Residents felt there was insufficient communication from County government. The residents that attended the community forums thought there should be more opportunities to actively participate in St. Louis County Government sponsored open meetings. Many residents also felt that other communicative devices, such as a newsletter, would be helpful.
- ! **Police Protection.** The service most residents endorsed as being the best provided by St. Louis County was police protection. A continued commitment to crime and drug prevention by the St. Louis County police department is of utmost importance to County residents.
- ! **Strong tax base.** Many residents believe the County is wealthy now with a slight chance of a recession lingering in the future; nonetheless, the County should use its strong tax base to finance enhancement to its service delivery capabilities.

# The County's Involvement in Delivery of Unincorporated Services

St. Louis County is in an unusual service delivery position for two reasons. First, it provides services like both a County and a city. Second, it contains within it an unusually large number of municipalities. Before we consider how St. Louis County can further enhance its service delivery to unincorporated areas, it is necessary to examine how the County has provided unincorporated services up to the present time.

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## St. Louis County's Dual Role

St. Louis County is in an unusual position as a service provider. A dichotomy exists in the delivery of services to the citizens of St. Louis County, as the County plays different roles for different segments of the population. On one hand, every County in the State of Missouri is required to provide a minimum level of service to the citizens residing within that County. Examples of these services include recording deeds, assessing property values, and collecting revenues.

In addition to the state mandates, citizens have put additional requirements on the County through the County's home-rule charter. St. Louis County is an urban first-class County that operates under its own home-rule charter. In taking on the additional responsibilities of a first-class home-rule charter County, St. Louis County has also taken on functions that cause the County to exceed state minimum service requirements and provide more enhanced functions, as a municipality would. Some of these services, like recreation programs, are provided to all citizens of the County, while others, like non-arterial street maintenance, are provided primarily to citizens of the County's unincorporated areas.

In serving residents of the unincorporated areas, the County utilizes the tools that a municipality would. The County taxes the utilities of its unincorporated

**In serving residents of the unincorporated areas, St. Louis County utilizes the tools that a municipality would.**

citizens and participates in the Countywide municipal sales tax pool. These revenues are vital to the County.

## The Role of Municipalities

The plethora of municipalities located within St. Louis County numbers in the 90s; dozens of other political jurisdictions overlap these boundaries in the form of service districts that support single functions like schools, junior colleges, sewers, libraries, and fire protection. It is a large and complex system with a variety of players. Some cities like Florissant and Wildwood take in large populations or large land areas, while others, like Country Life Acres and Champ, take in very small territory and only a handful of people. Municipalities provide both benefits and costs to St. Louis County.

Some municipalities in St. Louis County are economically and politically stable communities that greatly enhance the lives of citizens. These municipalities provide citizens with services that would otherwise be the County's responsibility. Some municipalities contract with the County for service provision. Others create their own service delivery mechanisms. When municipalities maintain stable communities and good property values, it is of benefit to the entire County. However, the high standard of service delivery maintained by certain municipalities raises the expectations of citizens regarding the County's own service delivery.

However, some municipalities struggle with problems far too complex for the often-skeletal government that exists. Communities such as

## Current State of Service Delivery

Wellston grapple with high unemployment, major disinvestment, and dysfunctional political systems. These communities, while not without potential, rely heavily on the County for assistance with planning, economic development, and other service provision. Other struggling communities that should be relying on the County for services do not, thereby maintaining an undesirable environment by not fully utilizing the resources available.

Furthermore, municipalities have incorporated or annexed large residential areas in the County and captured some very significant revenue-producing centers. When this occurs, as it did in the 1980s with the incorporation of Chesterfield and Maryland Heights, the County loses the utility tax revenues from those residents, has a smaller claim on the Countywide sales tax pool, and with the incorporation of revenue producers like Chesterfield Mall and Westport Plaza, shrinks as a point-of-sale center. While incorporation theoretically leads to a smaller service area for the County, the revenue reduction logically exceeds the service consumption in that geography. This leaves the County with fewer revenue sources to serve other areas (incorporated and unincorporated) that face significant problems. Attempts have been made to stabilize this valuable funding stream.

Municipalities bring value to the County, and play an important role in the lives of citizens. However, the large number of municipalities also impedes efficient and effective delivery of various County services. Some cities rely on the County for services, while others that could benefit from partnering with the County choose not to do so.

The current state of service delivery in St. Louis County is favorable, with room for improvement. Service delivery happens at two levels: systems levels (preparing to deliver the service) and at street level (actually delivering the service to citizens). An argument can be made that the County does both well, but at the same time has need for improvement in both areas. However, the service delivery environment in which the County operates is elaborate and unpredictable. Simple service provision such as street maintenance can become quite complex and involve multiple overlapping jurisdictions.

**Municipalities have incorporated or annexed large residential areas in the County and captured some very significant revenue-producing centers.**

# Best Practices From Around the Country: Government Service Delivery Initiatives

To make improvements in the service delivery to unincorporated areas, St. Louis County can utilize the benchmarking process. Comprised of three levels of action, the benchmarking process can help the County analyze its current performance in service delivery, help it discover regional or national best practices, and can cause the County to execute the initiatives developed in its five- year strategic plan. Although there were only limited requests for increased service delivery and management, the County must pro-actively deal with the service delivery issue so that current damaging trends can be alleviated before they become too difficult to change efficiently and effectively.

## The Benchmarking Process

Changes in County service delivery should be done methodically through a standardized process. The benchmarking process is an effective and sustainable method of doing this. The County should make a commitment to benchmarking, and invest the time and effort into doing it well, since benchmarking has proven quite successful in public, private, and nonprofit sectors alike. The benchmarking process consists of three general steps. First, the existing state of service delivery by St. Louis County must be measured. Second, a best practice for each service delivery area needs to be identified at a definable level. Third, and most importantly, a commitment must be made to model the best practice locally.

### ! Establishing Performance Benchmarks

St. Louis County already has the kernel of a benchmarking practice in its budgeting process through performance indicators. However, some areas (County Clerk, County Auditor, Miscellaneous Offices) have minimally-defined performance indicators or lists them as not applicable. Every department and division will need to review the budgetary performance indicators used in the budgeting process to ensure that these indicators completely reflect the department's or division's responsibility, not simply measuring for measurement's sake. Indicators should measure outcomes, not merely output. Once deemed reliable, these performance indicators can be used as the County's service delivery benchmark and a measure

of improvement over time.

### ! Identifying Best Practices

Best practices are subjective to the extent that the County may choose as broad or as narrow of a best practice as it desires, based on the performance indicator(s) it wishes to enhance. The County could select an entire system to model, such as emulating the award-winning government of the City of Phoenix, or select a departmental system to model, such as emulating the policing techniques of New York City, or select a very specific tool or technique to model, such as emulating the customer service hotline of the City of St. Louis. The level of best practice needs to be chosen up front, as well as the level of effort that will go into identifying that best practice (distance researching, on-site researching, targeted sample size, etc.).

### ! Modeling Best Practices

It is critically important that leaders of County government commit to actually implementing identified changes, tracking progress over time, and adjusting behavior accordingly. Studies and measures serve an important purpose, but must be used to achieve a desired outcome. Several County officials at the strategic planning retreat identified professional government as a strength of the County. Given this appreciation for professional standards, a proposal to adopt a benchmarking process philosophy is appropriate.

### ! Benchmarking Summary

Maintaining the status quo would not completely meet

the expectations of the County residents or the County officials. Steps need to be taken, but whether those steps include existing service enhancement or expansion into new service areas has yet to be determined.

It is very important that County government select its choices based on the big picture. County government should be viewed as a system in which each component affects the others, and all work under the unified guidance of a core mission managed by an effective CEO.

It is not enough to measure performance indicators. Performance must be measured for the purpose of continuous improvement over time. Best practices must be sought and modeled. Indicators should be appropriate to show when successful change has been accomplished. Every department should be conscious of its role and obligation.

The benchmarking process is a philosophy. It requires adoption by top leaders of the organization and a universal application across the organization. St. Louis County has not yet adopted this philosophy, and should strongly consider doing so.

## Best Practices

### ! County-to-Citizen Communication

#### , Newsletter

In Ocean City, Maryland, the community recently received national recognition for its community newsletter, which was honored because of its ability to effectively carry out specific communication goals.

#### , Website

The joint City of Indianapolis-Marion County website, [www.ci.indianapolis.in.us/services.html](http://www.ci.indianapolis.in.us/services.html), provides a comprehensive index of services, as well as on-line access to dozens of County and municipal services. This should serve as an example of linking both County and central city services.

### , Marketing / Public Relations Plan

The St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation is working on a marketing and public relations plan that could serve as a prototype for the rest of County government. A Countywide publicity function could be formed within the County Executive's office, or could be contracted to a private firm.

### ! Intra-Governmental Communication

A committee of County employees is currently studying this problem; the committee may want to look at the Board of Public Service (BPS) model used by the City of St. Louis; the BPS as it functions formally is not appropriate for St. Louis County, but the informal communication link does provide an example of how disparate departments (such as Health, Community Development, and the Airport) come together to discuss the impact of public works projects from different points of view.

### ! Inter-Governmental Communication

A committee of County employees is currently studying the problem of inter-governmental communication. Although many innovative urban areas have addressed this type of problem with solutions, most are not feasible for St. Louis County to implement in the next five years.

Currently, in St. Louis County, there are two existing local forums for government representatives, the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC) and the St. Louis County Municipal League. EWGCC has a multi-County, bi-state membership, but could offer a forum that is already staffed and funded. The St. Louis County Municipal League also is a potential forum theoretically, in that it has a strong membership base of the communities in the County, and since the City of St. Louis joined the Municipal League, there is more chance for coordination with the central city. The shortfall of these forums is that service districts are missing from their membership, and successful coordination cannot occur without representation from school, sewer, and fire protection districts at a minimum.

### **! Citizen-To-County Communication-The Citizens Service Bureau**

The Citizens Service Bureau of City of St. Louis (CSB) has been established as the “front door” for citizens needing assistance with local government; a single phone number has been established for the office, and this number is published on business cards that are distributed to every employee working in the field; when citizens raise issues directly to employees on a job site, or when those employees make a mistake (or excel in service!) involving citizens, the card can be handed out on-the-spot as a course of action; the feature of this system that makes it work well is that those who answer the main phone number are authorized to write a work order for any department in order to start an investigation of the problem and its solution; this program has been so successful that some departments now include a set number of CSB work orders in their annual budgets and give the CSB even more authority to dispatch workers to problem sites.

### **! Citizen-To-County Communication-Seamless Service Delivery**

Seamless Service Delivery by the City of Phoenix, Arizona brings about a well-coordinated delivery of service to citizens. Seamless service is a philosophy that builds in customer feedback and includes the core values of being dedicated to serving customers, learning, changing, and improving, working as a team, and focusing on results. Seamless service requires that employees work together, listen to residents, and provide the services citizens need.

### **! Budgeting**

The County needs to pursue budgeting efficiencies through make/buy decision-making. When faced with a service need, the County needs the appropriate data on hand to determine if it should “make” the service or “buy” the service.

Where the County chooses to make the service, it should identify its cost per unit at a level of quality, and should also identify excess capacity in that process. The County should begin to contract that capacity out to municipalities. This is the approach of the City of Brea, California, that was honored by the ICMA as a national best practice.

Where the County chooses to buy the service, it should have already defined its own cost per unit at a given level of quality. Here, larger municipalities could be a resource for the County. The County has an existing practice that basically does this in the form of purchased emergency medical services for Elmwood Park, an unincorporated area of St. Louis County that is not served by a fire district. The County reimburses responding service providers on a per-incident basis.

# Defining St. Louis County's Role in Unincorporated Service Delivery

Three possible courses of action can be taken for each of the issues associated with unincorporated service delivery. One course of action is to maintain the status quo of services. Although most County residents are satisfied with their services, it is difficult to justify the status quo, because it is difficult to conclude that improvements cannot be made. The County might be perceived as being unresponsive since some problems with the service delivery package were raised. Another option is increasing existing services. Some services seem underutilized due to a lack of awareness of their existence. However, cost could be an issue, and enhancing existing services might involve revising managing structures rather than building them. The third option is expanding into new areas of service. However, additional services such as surveys or newsletters could increase costs. Solutions to the unincorporated service issues will be explored in more detail in this section.

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There are potential improvements that can be made system-wide that will improve the capacity of the County to function better. This issue paper is restricted to discussion of systemic level improvements that will affect all County services, but individual departments are encouraged to utilize the benchmarking process in specific technical service delivery areas.

## County-to-Citizen Communication

### **! Citizens are unaware of the services available to them.**

Because of the number of governments providing services in St. Louis County, citizens are often confused as to what entity provides what service. Because of the confusion, citizens cannot make informed decisions about service provision. Improved communication from County to citizen is one way to clarify the services provided by St. Louis County. Currently, communication from County government to its citizens is project-driven and often in a compacted form, such as an insert with property tax statements. St. Louis County should consider establishing and producing a County newsletter with a minimum content quantity and targeted distribution and consider adding this to the County's website.

### **! Citizens are often unaware they are receiving a service provided by St.**

## **Louis County.**

Although the County marks its service areas with signage, markings are not coordinated or easily overlooked. Establishing some kind of "County government working for you" publicity effort using a multi-media approach would be beneficial. The County should also take advantage of newsletter opportunities, media relationships, municipal communications, and strong signage to build awareness of its service areas among citizens.

### **! There is no established point or procedure for citizen complaints.**

Functionally, citizens "go it alone" and the County is largely reactive in its approach to complaints. A phenomenon common to all levels of government is legislative involvement in citizen complaints. Even though all County residents are served by a council representative and many have additional representation on municipal councils that can act on the citizen's behalf, some legislators, especially those serving large pockets of unincorporated citizens, do not have appropriate levels of staffing to be operating at a high level of customer service. Additionally, only seven St. Louis County Council members, with a very uneven distribution of unincorporated residents, can have problems serving a population of about one million citizens and addressing citizen complaints.

Currently, a citizen advocate exists within the County Executive's office to handle public complaints. When the advocate receives a complaint, it is then

forwarded to the proper department, and that department must respond within a given time frame.

St. Louis County should be proactive in its citizen-to-County communication by actively soliciting feedback and establishing a clear “front door” for citizen input within a defined time frame, and with defined performance indicators. The County may also want to consider increasing staff for County Council representatives serving large unincorporated areas, since citizen needs would be higher than incorporated areas.

## Intra-governmental Communication

### ! Poor coordination between County departments.

Government operations can be so large that multiple County efforts may be occurring in a single area without knowledge of each other. This misses potential efficiencies between departments and can create a confusing environment for citizens. Coordination occurs to the extent that it is necessary to carry out specific duties; there is no established mechanism that requires or facilitates ongoing coordination. Establishing some mechanism, body, or practice that is dedicated to coordinating service delivery, perhaps defined by common service delivery geography should be evaluated. This entity should have targeted times for exchange of information and provide two-way communication with defined uses of input and feedback.

## Inter-governmental Communication

### ! Poor coordination between County and other service providers

Again, coordination between departments and agencies occurs to the extent that it is necessary to carry out specific duties; there is no endorsed mechanism that requires or facilitates ongoing coordination. The County would benefit by establishing some mechanism, body, or practice that

is dedicated to coordinating service delivery, perhaps defined geographically. This entity should have targeted times for exchange of information and provide two-way communications with defined uses of input and feedback.

## Budgeting

### ! The County lacks a reliable measurement of service delivery cost per unit, and is unable to measure cost of service delivery to unincorporated County residents.

The County budgets by department, without distinguishing between service areas. Although attempts are made to determine unit cost of service delivery, there is question as to how accurate this is. It would be advantageous for St. Louis County to define service delivery costs, both generally and in unincorporated areas.

## Take Action

St. Louis County faces many issues that are not serious now, but if left unchecked, could cause some dysfunction in service delivery at a future point. In order to make significant improvements for our customers, changes must be made at the systems level using a proven methodology such as a benchmarking practice.

The County is encouraged to consider adopting a benchmarking philosophy, and to institute systemic change that will allow departments to have better interface with their customers. Further, the County should take advantage of opportunities to be visible to citizens and make known to them what services are available.

The positive fact is that the communication and budgeting problems that face St. Louis County are manageable and relatively affordable to correct. Improvements are needed in the delivery of services, and not necessarily to the service provided. St. Louis County would be wise to consider improvements to the service delivery system now, while times are good for

the County, rather than finding itself in a reactionary mode as the City of St. Louis did in the 1970s and 1980s. Improving service delivery now may be one of the tools that keeps St. Louis County from experiencing in the early 2000s what the City of St. Louis experienced in the 1950s.

In order to improve, the County needs to empower itself to do so. The 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan offers a great opportunity to put in place systems that will allow the various departments of County government ways to implement immediate, long-term, and continuous improvements for the citizens of St. Louis County.

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# Outcomes & Strategies

Expert task forces were formed to develop the specific outcomes and strategies to address the four critical issues. The four task forces, one focusing on each strategic issue, were composed of internal and external experts with considerable knowledge regarding the issue. In order to gauge public reaction regarding the recommendations of the Strategic Plan, focus groups and an opinion poll were conducted in December 1999 and January 2000 by Attitude Research Company (ARC) on behalf of the St. Louis County Department of Planning.



## Expert Task Forces

Task force participants included County officials, municipal officials, regional and civic leaders, and private sector representatives. The respective department directors responsible for implementing the outcomes and the strategies developed by the task forces were gathered together for group meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain initial support and refine the outcomes and strategies. The task forces and meetings were facilitated by Development Strategies, Inc. (DSI) and FOCUS St. Louis, and the St. Louis County Department of Planning staff.



## Public Opinion Poll

Lastly, to gather public response toward the recommended outcomes and strategies, focus groups and a countywide survey was completed. The focus groups, made up of unincorporated and municipal County residents, helped refine opinion poll questions and served as qualitative data. The opinion poll was administered to 603 randomly selected households to ensure that the outcomes and strategies developed by the task forces were consistent with the ideas of the general public. Topics that were tested include infrastructure, parks and bike trails, MetroLink, downtown improvements in the City of St. Louis, and revitalizing deteriorating neighborhoods of St. Louis County through a Community Comeback Trust. The public opinion survey had a particular emphasis on tax initiatives targeted towards redevelopment. Highlights from the public opinion

poll include the following:

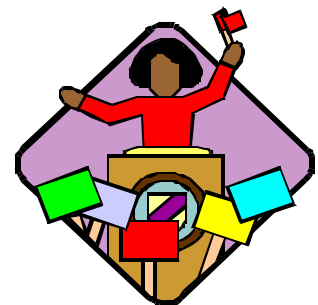
### ! Direction of St. Louis County

Similar to the 1999 countywide survey, respondents were asked their feelings about the direction of St. Louis County. Nearly 65% of the respondents felt St. Louis County was "moving in the right direction." When this question was broken down by unincorporated area or municipality, even larger numbers, in excess of 70% of survey respondents, felt their area of the County or city was moving in the right direction.

### ! Ballot Proposals and Initiatives

Five separate taxing proposals for the St. Louis metropolitan area were tested. All of these taxing proposals, a sales tax for downtown; a sales tax for bike trails; a sales tax for MetroLink; a use tax for reinvestment; and a bond proposal for infrastructure, would require voter approval. The

## PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NEW TAXES

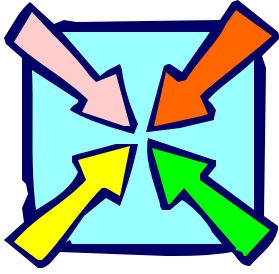


**When respondents were asked about their willingness to pay higher taxes, 53.7% indicated support if the issue is important enough. Additionally, 64.8% of those polled felt that, "helping deteriorated areas of St. Louis County is a countywide problem needing a countywide solution."**

most popular was "a bond proposal by St. Louis County to improve streets, parks, and other infrastructure in St. Louis County," which was favored by 72.1% of the respondents. Two other proposals received strong votes of confidence. "A proposed one-tenth sales tax to support a regional park and recreation district", was favored by 66.1%. Moreover, three in five (59.9%) favored a "proposed one quarter cent sales tax increase to support expanding MetroLink".

### **! Communication and the Internet**

Communication with citizens was identified as needing improvement in the initial countywide survey conducted in 1999. As a method of enhancing communication with citizens, a series of questions were asked about Internet access and use. When asked the question, "Do you have easy access to the Internet, either at home, at work or elsewhere," over 66% responded, "Yes". With respect to using the Internet to get new information and the frequency of use, over 50% responded that, "They use the Internet at least once per week." Finally, when the question, "Have you ever accessed the St. Louis County web-site?" was asked, 53.4% responded, "No".



# General Action Recommendations

<p><b>General Action Recommendation A</b> Review the organizational structure of St. Louis County government.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>Consolidation of departments and agencies to better respond to the strategic issues identified in this plan should be examined. Shifting divisions or sections from some departments to more appropriate locations in other departments should be considered.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Creation of formal relationships of key departments and agencies around the strategic issues should be explored. Short of consolidation, standing committees or work groups could address specific strategies identified in this plan.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #3</b></p>	<p>Developing strategic plans within each department of St. Louis County government is a logical next step. Department plans should be linked to this Strategic Plan and demonstrate how the four key strategic issues will be addressed. To date, the St. Louis County Economic Council, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Health have strategic plans.</p>
<p><b>General Action Recommendation B</b> Expand communications with St. Louis County citizens.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>An overall communications plan for St. Louis County government should be created to address the best ways to get information to County citizens, as well as how best to get their input. Such a plan should explore the use of newsletters, other direct mail options, surveys, new technologies and other creative means.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Responsiveness to citizens' questions, concerns, and service requests should be improved. Extensive customer training for employees, as well as better use of new technologies should be examined.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #3</b></p>	<p>Continue to improve and expand upon St. Louis County's current website, <a href="http://www.stlouisco.com">www.stlouisco.com</a>, with easy links to the various departments, services, and, very importantly, to other jurisdictions providing the services requested by citizens.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #4</b></p>	<p>Access to information for citizens should be made easier. Through the use of e-mail and voice mail, citizens could leave comments and questions at any time of the day while also receiving pre-recorded information on frequently asked questions. These options should complement, not replace, personal contact with the public.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #5</b></p>	<p>A separate annual report on the progress of the Strategic Plan should be published. The report would reinforce the value of planning in improving St. Louis County's quality of life while also motivating County officials to follow through on the plan's adopted policies and actions.</p>

<p><b>General Action Recommendation C</b> Explore ways to finance changes and growth in St. Louis County.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>Existing resources should be analyzed annually to determine if they support the desired outcomes of the plan. Consideration should be given to reallocating existing resources to fund strategic priorities.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Additional resources needed to implement the Strategic Plan should be identified. Possible sources of funding might include creating new taxes and fees, pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic grants, and, if necessary, raising existing taxes and fees. Continually enhancing the County’s tax base, as well improving efficiencies should be pursued as well.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #3</b></p>	<p>Funding for capital improvements should be a priority. The identified strategic issues raise the need for a countywide capital improvement plan, possibly funded by a bond issue. County voters last approved a general bond issue for streets, parks, and other improvements in 1986. With its AAA bond rating, St. Louis County is in an excellent position to evaluate this option.</p>
<p><b>General Action Recommendation D</b> Recognize the diversity of St. Louis County.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>St. Louis County’s ability to be inclusive will set an example for others. Policies and practices to promote diversity should be reviewed, developed, and implemented.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Increase the level of awareness and expertise within County government to assist residents and neighborhoods in addressing diversity issues. Additional training, partnering with organizations with the needed expertise, or designating community liaisons should be considered.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #3</b></p>	<p>Engage regional organizations, community leaders, and citizens in round table discussions and other activities to break down racial and ethnic barriers in the County’s communities. Historic obstacles must be removed throughout the region to assure equal opportunity for every citizen.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #4</b></p>	<p>Continue tracking and reporting minority participation in County Government including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of staff, as well as the appointment of representatives to County boards and commissions.</p>



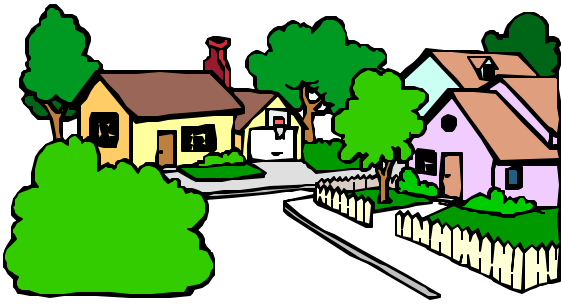
# County's Role In The Region

## Public Opinion Poll Highlights:

- ! 59.4% of the respondents agree that, "Something must be done to reduce the number of municipal governments in St. Louis County."
- ! 36.% of the respondents agree that, "Crime and big city problems are moving to my area of St. Louis County."
- ! Opinions are nearly evenly split about sprawl: 47.3% agree that, "We need to place limits on growth in order to stop sprawl," compared to 49.1% agree that, "People should be allowed to live wherever they want, without government interference."

<b>Role In The Region Outcome A</b>	
St. Louis County enhances its regional leadership role, and fosters intergovernmental collaboration.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Support the development and implementation of a regional leadership program for government officials, using a neutral third party to conduct and facilitate the program.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Institutionalize a delegation caucus comprised of state and local government officials from the seven Missouri counties to plan and coordinate a regional legislative agenda.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Strengthen the relationship between St. Louis County, municipal leaders, and the St. Louis County Municipal League by meeting regularly to identify legislation to jointly pursue, and by assigning a St. Louis County liaison to the local City Manager's Association.
<b>Strategy #4</b>	Review, and revise as needed, existing legislation to facilitate consolidation of governmental entities.
<b>Role In The Region Outcome B</b>	
St. Louis County promotes regional economic development and develops a highly skilled, competitive workforce.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Explore innovative approaches for funding regional economic development by meeting with regional leaders and experts to discuss the implementation of a shared revenue source for economic development.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Develop a comprehensive economic development plan and database for St. Louis County identifying the available tracts of land that can be assembled for redevelopment.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Establish an education liaison within St. Louis County government to work on regional public education and workforce development issues in conjunction with businesses, school districts, colleges, and universities.

<b>Role In The Region Outcome C</b> Collaboratively develop a sustainable long-range growth strategy for the twelve county region focusing on redevelopment and regional planning.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Review and revise existing St. Louis County land use, zoning, and permitting policies to ensure support for redevelopment and regional planning.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Review Illinois and Missouri housing, transportation, and economic development investment practices with state agencies and legislators to determine barriers to redevelopment and regional planning.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Convene meetings to develop a regional growth strategy with county and municipal leaders, state legislators, and other key interest groups. Use a neutral third party to facilitate the meetings.
<b>Strategy #4</b>	Partner with municipalities and counties to develop state planning legislation, using Tennessee and Maryland's existing legislation for guidance. Types of legislation to be examined include establishment of regional planning goals and mandatory comprehensive planning.



# Reinvestment In Older Communities

## Public Opinion Poll Highlights:

- ! 33% of the respondents agree that, "I'm worried about the decline in property values in my area of St. Louis County."
- ! 59.2% of the respondents agree that, "There are many parts of St. Louis County that are run-down and need to be redeveloped."
- ! 82.4% of the respondents agree that, "I'm in favor of occupancy permit laws for my area-laws that require houses and apartments to pass a code inspection before a new occupant can move in."

<b>Reinvestment in Older Communities Outcome A</b> Communities lacking adequate resources and capacity throughout St. Louis County are identified and reinvestment initiatives are targeted at improving the economic, employment, and building conditions within those targeted communities.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Define and establish criteria for identifying reinvestment communities in both municipalities and unincorporated County for use as a guide for setting priorities and coordinating reinvestment activities.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Organize neighborhood-level community programs and workshops in St. Louis County that focus on building capacity and educating local community organizations.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	In partnership with the identified targeted reinvestment communities, develop asset-based plans and image-building campaigns.
<b>Reinvestment in Older Communities Outcome B</b> Existing federal, state, and local regulations facilitate and promote reinvestment in older communities.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Institute a residential re-occupancy permit program in all areas of unincorporated St. Louis County.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Evaluate and modify existing land use, permit, and related regulations of the County, State, and municipalities that deter reinvestment. Identify and draft new legislation, as needed, to promote reinvestment opportunities.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Review and revise policies and legal requirements regarding acquisition, consolidation, and disposition of all properties deemed suitable for redevelopment in targeted communities.

Outcomes & Strategies: Reinvestment in Older Communities

<p><b>Reinvestment in Older Communities Outcome C</b>                  Financial resources are available to implement reinvestment strategies in targeted communities.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>Evaluate and seek modifications as necessary, for sharing or redistributing public resources and/or tax bases more fully so that the entire County benefits from reinvestment.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Create a source of funding to lead and encourage large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial redevelopment. This fund would be used for activities such as land acquisition, and preparing land for redevelopment.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #3</b></p>	<p>Develop and implement a multi-year, multi-jurisdictional capital improvement program funded through a bond issue, County-wide sales tax or other dedicated funding source.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #4</b></p>	<p>Create tax credit and other incentive programs to encourage reinvestment activities, and market existing incentive programs.</p>
<p><b>Reinvestment in Older Communities Outcome D</b>                  Reinvestment initiatives throughout St. Louis County are coordinated and consolidated to promote efficiency and achieve maximum results.</p>	
<p><b>Strategy #1</b></p>	<p>Integrate creating economic development, job training, and home ownership opportunities into community planning efforts.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #2</b></p>	<p>Work with existing code enforcement officials and organizations in the region to encourage lesson-sharing and to develop consistent minimum standards for property maintenance and the rehabilitation of existing structures.</p>



# Transportation

## Public Opinion Poll Highlights:

- ! 59.6% of respondents favor a, "proposed one quarter cent sales tax increase to support expanding MetroLink."
- ! 66.1% of the respondents favor, "a proposed one-tenth cent sales tax increase, to support a regional park and recreation district. This district would develop an interconnected biking and hiking trail network, increase park safety, and improve and expand existing parks."

<b>Transportation Outcome A</b>	
Improved movement of persons, goods and services in St. Louis County through greater connection between land use and the multi-modal transportation network.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Develop a conceptual long-range land use plan for St. Louis County that emphasizes the relationships and impacts between land use and transportation. The plan should be incorporated into the general blueprint for the region recommended in East-West Gateway's "Initiative for a Metropolitan Community." Opportunities for multi-modal linkages and transit- oriented development near MetroLink and bus transfer stations should be included. Road improvements should be considered for areas with adopted plans for commercial and industrial redevelopment.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Conduct a traffic delay study of St. Louis County's Arterial Road System (ARS) that identifies the causes of congestion and suggests ways to reduce/remove unnecessary restrictions which hinder the flow of traffic (e.g., unwarranted traffic devices, artificially low speed limits, turn restrictions and poor design). The study should also include Transportation Systems Management (TSM) strategies to relieve peak hour traffic congestion (e.g., carpooling, flex-time for large employers, incident management).
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Develop an assessment of the ability of St. Louis County residents and businesses to access different modes of the transportation network (highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and air and water port facilities) using GIS software. Identify measures to improve access.
<b>Strategy #4</b>	Create a St. Louis Regional Airport Authority which provides regional governance of the publicly owned and operated airports (Lambert and Spirit of St. Louis) in the County. The City of St. Louis and St. Louis County should be the initial partners in the Authority; the system should allow for the addition of representatives from other counties in the future.
<b>Strategy #5</b>	Establish a transportation planning committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Parks (bikeways), Planning (corridor improvements) and Highways & Traffic to act as a single entity for planning bicycle, pedestrian and road projects. The first project should be an interdepartmental review of the Bicycle Transportation Program being developed by the Parks & Recreation Department to identify opportunities for implementation of recommendations, including access to major recreational areas.

<b>Strategy #6</b>	Assign a staff level liaison to work with the Bi-State Development Agency to improve the quality and efficiency of transit programs that serve County users. Strategies should be considered to reduce travel times for customers, lower operating costs, improve access to jobs for entry-level workers, and involve private employer participation in cost sharing and transit service provision. Assign a senior level staff person to attend Bi-State Development Agency meetings to advocate County positions.
<b>Strategy #7</b>	Improve accessibility through selected corridors by conducting traffic analyses that forecast future travel demand and identify solutions for meeting projected demand.
<b>Strategy #8</b>	Continue St. Louis County's aggressive policy of installing sidewalks (5-foot width) as part of all new capital projects along County arterial roadways and along other arterials without pedestrian facilities. Implement a policy to evaluate bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of all new road construction projects.
<b>Transportation Outcome B</b> Enhanced safety and security on St. Louis County transportation facilities.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Assess the use of intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology and incident management on County roads and encourage MODOT to coordinate its system with St. Louis County.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Evaluate safety and security needs in public transportation areas, particularly at existing and planned MetroLink stations in the County. Improve coordination between St. Louis County and municipalities for police and security patrols around bus and light rail facilities.
<b>Transportation Outcome C</b> Improved efficiency, capacity and maintenance for all modes in the County transportation system.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Develop a more logical St. Louis County Arterial Road System (ARS) with a continuous network of arterial roads to provide better coordination of road maintenance and improvements, with responsibilities more appropriately divided between St. Louis County and municipalities. Utilize a regional transportation specialist supported by both St. Louis County and municipalities to devise the new road plan and build consensus regarding what level of government should be responsible for various roads.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Assume a leadership role on organized committees of East-West Gateway and other agencies to develop new comprehensive, long-term funding sources for transportation programs, including mass transit, in the St. Louis region. Advocate St. Louis County positions on major transportation investment analyses (MTIA) and other studies to direct funding for needed improvements.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Improve transportation-related data collection and analysis to enhance the County's ability to plan and evaluate transportation infrastructure and service development. Use GIS software to display and analyze existing and future conditions for staff use and to educate citizens about transportation needs at town hall and other community meetings.



# Unincorporated Services

## Public Opinion Poll Highlights:

- ! 61.6% of respondents agree that they get “excellent value in services for the taxes paid to the County.”
- ! 49.1% of respondents agree that, “I just don’t trust County government to spend tax dollars wisely.”
- ! 53.7% of respondents agree that, “I’d be willing to support higher taxes if the issue is important enough.”

<b>Unincorporated Services Outcome A</b>	
Identify minimum levels of essential services delivered to citizens of unincorporated areas.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Identify "essential" County services, as well as baseline service level expectations for those services, using citizen input and survey research.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Develop departmental budgets that support baseline service levels of essential services, and provide associated cost data for additional levels, so that finalized budgets reflect the desired level of service to the community.
<b>Unincorporated Services Outcome B</b>	
Utilize a performance management budgeting system to improve services to citizens.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Develop departmental program/function goals and objectives that support the strategic plan.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Change departmental budgeting practices, from tracking workload indicators to defining and tracking outcome or output measures.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Develop performance indicators (outcome measures) for selected services to measure progress towards goals and objectives.
<b>Strategy #4</b>	Develop a financial management system to collect needed data and evaluate progress
<b>Strategy #5</b>	Develop an annual report to citizens highlighting service performance.
<b>Unincorporated Service Outcome C</b>	
Improve communication with County citizens and increased opportunities for citizen feedback.	
<b>Strategy #1</b>	Develop and implement a marketing/communication plan to better inform citizens of County services. The plan should evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of communication, and identify specific strategies to address the needs of unincorporated residents, such as the publication of a newsletter.
<b>Strategy #2</b>	Establish a customer service system where citizens can have questions answered, information given, and complaints addressed at any entry point.
<b>Strategy #3</b>	Measure citizens' satisfaction with the County's communication efforts as part of an annual survey or through focus group research.
<b>Strategy #4</b>	Create response time standards for following up with citizen complaints/inquiries and requests for service and track performance.

# Action Plan

This section of the Strategic Plan contains St. Louis County's Action Plan for the next five years. The Plan's outcomes and strategies have been assigned to the appropriate County departments and have been designated a year in which implementation should commence. A complete Action Plan by year follows.

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## Action Plans

Action Plans outline the specific measures County departments will complete each year to further the implementation of 2000-2004 Strategic Plan. Action Plans also

detail who will be the lead department, the target date for completion, and potential partnership opportunities. Departmental Action Plans will be updated annually during the budget cycle for the life of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.



## Partnerships

Implementing the general action recommendations and outcomes and strategies of the 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan will be the primary responsibility of County departments. However, departments might find it beneficial to establish partnerships if assistance is needed to implement the recommendation, outcome, or strategy. Additionally, partnerships are beneficial in providing additional expertise, consolidating resources, and reducing duplication of efforts. Potential partnerships can be formed with the private sector, regional agencies, civic organizations, communities, and citizens.



Budget

## Linking to the Budget

Critical to Strategic Plan implementation is ensuring that departmental budgets and work plans are linked to the recommendations, outcomes, and strategies of the Strategic Plan. Action Plans will assist departments in determining the year actions will be taken. Departments can then project staff, resources, and

dollars in the appropriate budget year. Beginning with fiscal year 2001, Action Plans should be directly tied to departmental budget requests.



## Completing Your Action Plan

If your department is responsible for implementing any outcomes and strategies of the 2000-2004

Strategic Plan, a customized Action Plan for your department is included. The Action Plan contains the general action recommendations and outcomes and strategies that your department is responsible for implementing, either alone or in partnership with other County departments or external partners. Departments will design a yearly Action Plan listing the specific measures, lead department, target date for completion, and potential partnership opportunities. The St. Louis County Department of Planning will provide technical assistance to departments if needed. Action Plans will then be presented to the County Executive and cabinet for feedback and to ensure coordination among departments.

# Action Plan By Year

This section represents the overall implementation time frame for the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan. The outcomes and strategies are organized under the year in which the strategy will be initiated. Some of the general action recommendations, however, are to be initiated annually from 2000 to 2004, and are noted accordingly. The lead department responsible for implementation is also listed.

## STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED ANNUALLY FROM 2000-2004

ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>General Action Recommendations</b>	Consolidation of departments and agencies to better respond to the strategic issues identified in this plan should be examined. Shifting divisions or sections from some departments to more appropriate locations in other departments should be considered.	County Executive
	Creation of formal relationships of key departments and agencies around the strategic issues should be explored. Short of consolidation, standing committees or work groups could address specific strategies identified in this plan.	County Executive
	Developing strategic plans within each department of St. Louis County government is a logical next step. Department plans should be linked to this Strategic Plan and demonstrate how the four key strategic issues will be addressed. To date, the St. Louis County Economic Council, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Health have strategic plans.	County Executive
	Responsiveness to citizens' questions, concerns, and service requests should be improved. Extensive customer training for employees, as well as better use of new technologies should be examined.	County Executive
	Continue to improve and expand upon St. Louis County's current website, www.stlouisco.com, with easy links to the various departments, services, and, very importantly, to other jurisdictions providing the services requested by citizens.	Administration / Technology Manager
	Access to information for citizens should be made easier. Through the use of e-mail and voice mail, citizens could leave comments and questions at any time of the day while also receiving pre-recorded information on frequently asked questions. These options should complement, not replace, personal contact with the public.	County Executive
	A separate annual report on the progress of the Strategic Plan should be published. The report would reinforce the value of planning in improving St. Louis County's quality of life while also motivating County officials to follow through on the plan's adopted policies and actions.	Planning
	Existing resources should be analyzed annually to determine if they support the desired outcomes of the plan. Consideration should be given to reallocating existing resources to fund strategic priorities.	County Executive
	Additional resources needed to implement the Strategic Plan should be identified. Possible sources of funding might include creating new taxes and fees, pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic grants, and, if necessary, raising existing taxes and fees. Continually enhancing the County's tax base, as well improving efficiencies should be pursued as well.	County Executive
	St. Louis County's ability to be inclusive will set an example for others. Policies and practices to promote diversity should be reviewed, developed, and implemented.	County Executive

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## STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED ANNUALLY FROM 2000-2004

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ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>General Action Recommendations - continued -</b>	Increase the level of awareness and expertise within County government to assist residents and neighborhoods in addressing diversity issues. Additional training, partnering with organizations with the needed expertise, or designating community liaisons should be considered.	County Executive
	Engage regional organizations, community leaders, and citizens in round table discussions and other activities to break down racial and ethnic barriers in the County's communities. Historic obstacles must be removed throughout the region to assure equal opportunity for every citizen.	County Executive
	Continue tracking and reporting minority participation in County Government including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of staff, as well as the appointment of representatives to County boards and commissions.	Administration/ Personnel Director
<b>Unincorporated Services</b>	Measure citizens' satisfaction with the County's communication efforts as part of an annual survey or through focus group research.	County Executive/ Planning

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**YEAR 2000**


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ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>County's Role in the Region</b>	Strengthen the relationship between St. Louis County, municipal leaders, and the St. Louis County Municipal League by meeting regularly to identify legislation to jointly pursue, and by assigning a St. Louis County liaison to the local City Manager's Association.	County Executive
	Review, and revise as needed, existing legislation to facilitate consolidation of governmental entities.	Planning
	Explore innovative approaches for funding regional economic development by meeting with regional leaders and experts to discuss the implementation of a shared revenue source for economic development.	Economic Council
	Establish an education liaison within St. Louis County government to work on regional public education and workforce development issues in conjunction with businesses, school districts, colleges, and universities.	County Executive
	Review and revise existing St. Louis County land use, zoning, and permitting policies to ensure support for redevelopment and regional planning.	Planning
<b>Reinvestment in Older Communities</b>	Define and establish criteria for identifying reinvestment communities in both municipalities and unincorporated County for use as a guide for setting priorities and coordinating reinvestment activities.	Planning
	Evaluate and seek modifications as necessary, for sharing or redistributing public resources and/or tax bases more fully so that the entire County benefits from reinvestment.	County Executive
	Create a source of funding to lead and encourage large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial redevelopment. This fund would be used for activities such as land acquisition, and preparing land for redevelopment.	County Executive Economic Council
	Create tax credit and other incentive programs to encourage reinvestment activities, and market existing incentive programs.	Planning/OCD Economic Council
	Integrate creating economic development, job training, and home ownership opportunities into community planning efforts.	Economic Council
<b>Transportation</b>	Conduct a traffic delay study of St. Louis County's Arterial Road System (ARS) that identifies the causes of congestion and suggests ways to reduce/remove unnecessary restrictions which hinder the flow of traffic (e.g., unwarranted traffic devices, artificially low speed limits, turn restrictions and poor design). The study should also include Transportation Systems Management (TSM) strategies to relieve peak hour traffic congestion (e.g., carpooling, flex-time for large employers, incident management).	Highways
	Develop an assessment of the ability of St. Louis County residents and businesses to access different modes of the transportation network (highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and air and water port facilities) using GIS software. Identify measures to improve access.	Planning

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**YEAR 2000**


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Create a St. Louis Regional Airport Authority which provides regional governance of the publicly owned and operated airports (Lambert and Spirit of St. Louis) in the County. The City of St. Louis and St. Louis County should be the initial partners in the Authority; the system should allow for the addition of representatives from other counties in the future.

County Executive

ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>Transportation - continued -</b>	Improve accessibility through selected corridors by conducting traffic analyses that forecast future travel demand and identify solutions for meeting projected demand.	Highways
	Continue St. Louis County's aggressive policy of installing sidewalks (5-foot width) as part of all new capital projects along County arterial roadways and along other arterials without pedestrian facilities. Implement a policy to evaluate bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of all new road construction projects.	Highways
	Assess the use of intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology and incident management on County roads and encourage MODOT to coordinate its system with St. Louis County.	Highways
	Establish a transportation planning committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Parks (bikeways), Planning (corridor improvements) and Highways & Traffic to act as a single entity for planning bicycle, pedestrian and road projects. The first project should be an interdepartmental review of the Bicycle Transportation Program being developed by the Parks & Recreation Department to identify opportunities for implementation of recommendations, including access to major recreational areas.	Parks (1st) Rotating schedule with Highways, Parks, and Planning
	Assign a staff level liaison to work with the Bi-State Development Agency to improve the quality and efficiency of transit programs that serve County users. Strategies should be considered to reduce travel times for customers, lower operating costs, improve access to jobs for entry-level workers, and involve private employer participation in cost sharing and transit service provision. Assign a senior level staff person to attend Bi-State Development Agency meetings to advocate County positions.	Planning
	Assume a leadership role on organized committees of East-West Gateway and other agencies to develop new comprehensive, long-term funding sources for transportation programs, including mass transit, in the St. Louis region. Advocate St. Louis County positions on major transportation investment analyses (MTIA) and other studies to direct funding for needed improvements.	County Executive
<b>Unincorporated Services</b>	Identify "essential" County services, as well as baseline service level expectations for those services, using citizen input and survey research.	Administration / Budget Office
	Develop departmental budgets that support baseline service levels of essential services, and provide associated cost data for additional levels, so that finalized budgets reflect the desired level of service to the community.	Administration / Budget Office
	Develop departmental program/function goals and objectives that support the strategic plan.	Administration / Budget Office
	Change departmental budgeting practices, from tracking workload indicators to defining and tracking outcome or output measures.	Administration / Budget Office

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**YEAR 2001**


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ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>General Action Recommendations</b>	An overall communications plan for St. Louis County government should be created to address the best ways to get information to County citizens, as well as how best to get their input. Such a plan should explore the use of newsletters, other direct mail options, surveys, new technologies and other creative means.	County Executive
	Funding for capital improvements should be a priority. The identified strategic issues raise the need for a countywide capital improvement plan, possibly funded by a bond issue. County voters last approved a general bond issue for streets, parks, and other improvements in 1986. With its AAA bond rating, St. Louis County is in an excellent position to evaluate this option.	County Executive
<b>County's Role in the Region</b>	Develop a comprehensive economic development plan and database for St. Louis County identifying the available tracts of land that can be assembled for redevelopment.	Planning
	Convene meetings to develop a regional growth strategy with County and municipal leaders, state legislators, and other key interest groups. Use a neutral third party to facilitate the meetings.	County Executive
<b>Reinvestment in Older Communities</b>	Organize neighborhood-level community programs and workshops in St. Louis County that focus on building capacity and educating local community organizations.	Planning/OCD
	In partnership with the identified targeted reinvestment communities, develop asset-based plans and image-building campaigns.	Planning
	Institute a residential re-occupancy permit program in all areas of unincorporated St. Louis County.	Public Works
	Review and revise policies and legal requirements regarding acquisition, consolidation, and disposition of all properties deemed suitable for redevelopment in targeted communities.	Economic Council
	Develop and implement a multi-year, multi-jurisdictional capital improvement program funded through a bond issue, County-wide sales tax or other dedicated funding source.	County Executive
	Work with existing code enforcement officials and organizations in the region to encourage lesson-sharing and to develop consistent minimum standards for property maintenance and the rehabilitation of existing structures.	Public Works
<b>Transportation</b>	Evaluate safety and security needs in public transportation areas, particularly at existing and planned MetroLink stations in the County. Improve coordination between St. Louis County and municipalities for police and security patrols around bus and light rail facilities.	Police
	Develop a more logical St. Louis County Arterial Road System (ARS) with a continuous network of arterial roads to provide better coordination of road maintenance and improvements, with responsibilities more appropriately divided between St. Louis County and municipalities. Utilize a regional transportation specialist supported by both St. Louis County and municipalities to devise the new road plan and build consensus regarding what level of government should be responsible for various roads.	Highways
	Improve transportation-related data collection and analysis to enhance the County's ability to plan and evaluate transportation infrastructure and service development. Use GIS software to display and analyze existing and future conditions for staff use and to educate citizens about transportation needs at town hall and other community meetings.	Planning

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**YEAR 2001**


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ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>Unincorporated Services</b>	Develop performance indicators (outcome measures) for selected services to measure progress towards goals and objectives.	Administration / Budget Office
	Develop a financial management system to collect needed data and evaluate progress	Administration
	Develop and implement a marketing/communication plan to better inform citizens of County services. The plan should evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of communication, and identify specific strategies to address the needs of unincorporated residents, such as the publication of a newsletter.	County Executive

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**YEAR 2002**


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ISSUE	STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>County's Role in the Region</b>	Institutionalize a delegation caucus comprised of state and local government officials from the seven Missouri counties to plan and coordinate a regional legislative agenda.	County Executive
	Partner with municipalities and counties to develop state planning legislation, using Tennessee and Maryland's existing legislation for guidance. Types of legislation to be examined include establishment of regional planning goals and mandatory comprehensive planning.	Planning
<b>Reinvestment in Older Communities</b>	Evaluate and modify existing land use, permit, and related regulations of the County, State, and municipalities that deter reinvestment. Identify and draft new legislation, as needed, to promote reinvestment opportunities.	Planning
<b>Transportation</b>	Develop a conceptual long-range land use plan for St. Louis County that emphasizes the relationships and impacts between land use and transportation. The plan should be incorporated into the general blueprint for the region recommended in East-West Gateway's "Initiative for a Metropolitan Community." Opportunities for multi-modal linkages and transit-oriented development near MetroLink and bus transfer stations should be included. Road improvements should be considered for areas with adopted plans for commercial and industrial redevelopment.	Planning
<b>Unincorporated Services</b>	Develop an annual report to citizens highlighting service performance.	Administration
	Establish a customer service system where citizens can have questions answered, information given, and complaints addressed at any entry point.	County Executive/ Administration
	Create response time standards for following up with citizen complaints/inquiries and requests for service and track performance.	County Executive

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**YEARS 2003 - 2004**

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<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>STRATEGIES TO BE INITIATED</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>County's Role in the Region</b>	Support the development and implementation of a regional leadership program for government officials, using a neutral third party to conduct and facilitate the program.	County Executive

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# Monitoring and Evaluating the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan

One of the key elements of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan is a process for monitoring and evaluating performance. By having a systematic way for comparing actual performance to planned performance, the effectiveness of the actions can be determined. With that knowledge, St. Louis County government can reassess what to do differently in the future to better achieve outcomes and strategies in the Strategic Plan. A formal process for monitoring and evaluating performance also increases the accountability of County government in implementing the outcomes and strategies of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.

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Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan will be an ongoing process requiring the time and commitment of the County Executive's Office, County Council, department directors and key staff. Ideally, the process to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan would include three key elements:

- ! **Internal Progress Report**
- ! **External Review**
- ! **Annual Report Card**



## Internal Progress Report

Internally, a key to monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Strategic Plan would be regular progress reports completed by the County departments responsible for implementing the recommended strategies. The completion of these progress reports should be timed to be compatible with the County's annual budget cycle. The County Executive's Office is recommended to review the progress reports and serve as the overall internal monitor for the Strategic Plan. The Planning Department could serve an internal consultant to assist County departments in completing and coordinating the reports prior to being presented to the County Executive's Office and County Council.

The progress reports would describe the actions taken by departments toward achieving a specific outcome and strategy of the Strategic Plan, and might include costs, benefits, performance measures, and progress to date. It is recommended that the progress reports become on-line documents, facilitating the ease in

which departments submit them for review.

## External Review



Externally, an independent committee could assist with monitoring and

providing feedback on the County's progress of implementing the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan, much in the same way the earlier Steering Committee provided oversight to the strategic planning process. The committee might be made up of citizens and other County stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. It is recommended that the external committee meet at least annually to review progress reports from County departments. The committee could review and comment on the semi-annual reports, and forward their feedback to the County Executive's Office.



## Annual Report Card

At the end of each year of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan, it is recommended that an annual report card be produced and released to the general public. The annual report card would evaluate the year's activities related to the Strategic Plan based upon how well St. Louis County has furthered the achievement of the outcomes and strategies of the Strategic Plan.

# Acknowledgments

St. Louis County wishes to extend its gratitude to all of the individuals who assisted with the development of the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.

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## **Strategic Plan Staff**

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Becky Behlmann-Bilyeu  
Jim Brasfield  
Jerry Bryan  
Edith Cunnane  
Jim Farrell  
Sister Gail Guelker  
Frank Hamsher  
Tom Irwin  
Chris Krehmeyer  
Claire McCown  
Jim McHugh  
Don Moschenross  
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Les Sterman  
Rick Sullivan  
Marcel Turner  
Jeff Wagener

## **St. Louis County Executive**

Buzz Westfall

## **St. Louis County Council**

Charlie Dooley  
Robert Young  
Edith Cunnane  
James O'Mara  
Kurt Odenwald  
Jeff Wagener  
Gregory Quinn

## **St. Louis County Departments**

Administration  
Budget  
County Executive  
County Counselor  
Economic Council  
Health  
Highways and Traffic  
Housing Authority  
Human Services  
Judicial Administration  
Justice Services  
Personnel  
Parks and Recreation  
Planning  
Police  
Public Works  
Revenue  
Spirit of St. Louis Airport

## **A Special Thank You**

**Thank you to the thousands of citizens who shared their thoughts and provided input into the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan.**

- ' Focus Group Members
- ' Telephone Survey Respondents
- ' Community Forum Participants
- ' Opinion Poll Respondents
- ' Telephone Hotline Callers
- ' Individuals who e-mail and sent letters

# Acknowledgments

St. Louis County wishes to extend its gratitude to all of the individuals who assisted with the development of the 2000-2000 Strategic Plan.

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## Strategic Plan Task Forces

<i>County's Role in the Region</i>	<i>Reinvestment in Older Communities</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Unincorporated Services</i>
Jim Baker	Theresa Carper	Mark Bishop	Ron Battelle
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David Boyd	Joe Donahue	Donna Day	Fred Douglas
Ronnie Bryant	Charlie Dooley	J. Michael Dooley	Lillian Eunice
Molly Bunton	Garry Earls	Melford P. Ferguson	Ruby Gill
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Robert Hall	Kim Koenig	David A. Kip	Mike McDowell
Barry Hogue	Jim Koman	Stephen Knobbe	Gail Ottolino
Steve Hoven	Fred Kratky	Jim McHugh	Sandra Parker
E. Terrence Jones	Chris Krehmeyer	Kathleen T. Osborn	Pam Reitz
Joe Koenig	Carol Winters Laslo	Shirley Paro	Fran Russell
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Don Mochenross	Carmen McClendon	Max Starkloff	Don Spencer
Rudy Nickens	Claire McCown	Susan Stauder	Jeff Wagener
Richard Patton	Neil Molloy	Jim Wild	Karen Wittkoetter
Don Phares	Stan Mulvihill	Paul L. Wojciechowski	Genie Zakrzewski
Joyce Ann Pressley	Mike Reilly	Mike Zeltmann	
Peter Sortino	Pete Salsich		
	Patrick S. Sullivan		
	Rosemary Terranova		
	Betty Van Uum		
	Mary Walls		
	Lucille Walton		
	Ron Watermon		
	Jackie Wellington		

# Appendix A

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## **Focus Groups Executive Summary and Telephone Survey Report**

Prepared for the St. Louis County Department of Planning by Attitude Research Company, March 1999.

# Appendix B

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## **Summary of Key Issues Raised During Retreat**

Prepared for the St. Louis County Department of Planning by Development Strategies and FOCUS St. Louis, February 1999.

# Appendix C

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## Community Forum Meeting Notes

Prepared for the St. Louis County Department of Planning by Development Strategies and FOCUS St. Louis, April 1999.

# Appendix D

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## **Public Opinion Poll Final Report**

Prepared for the St. Louis County Department of Planning by Unicom/Attitude Research Company, February 2000.

# Additional Strategic Plan Resources

The 2000-2004 St. Louis County Strategic Plan is the cumulation of two years of committee work, citizen surveys, public engagement, trend analysis, presentations, expert task force recommendations, and numerous meetings between Department of Planning staff, consultants, County Executive's Office, and department directors. Additional resources that were used to develop the 2000-2004 Strategic Plan are available upon request from the St. Louis County Department of Planning.

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## **The Strategic Planning Process**

St. Louis County Department of Planning, August 1998

## **St. Louis County: On the Brink of Change Video**

St. Louis County Department of Planning, February, 1999

## **Draft Strategic Plan For Public Review**

St. Louis County Department of Planning, October 1999